



WEEK TWO



LIVING IN OUR HEADS

“Mindfulness is deliberately paying full attention to what is happening around you and within you-in your body, heart and mind. Mindfulness is awareness without criticism or judgement.” ~ (Jan Chozen Bays)

“Beginning again does not mean we have made an error. It is the heart of the practice, not a deviation from it.” ~ (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

WEEK 2: LIVING IN OUR HEADS

Our aim in this Sunday Morning MBSR is to be more aware more often. One element that inhibits us from being “fully present in each moment” is our *automatic tendency to judge* our experience as if it’s not quite right in some way – “this is not what should be happening!” “It isn’t good enough!” These type of *judgments* can lead to sequences of thoughts about blame- or what needs to be changed, or how things could or should be different. More often than not, these type of thoughts take us automatically, down well-worn paths in our minds. In this way, we *can lose our awareness of the moment* and, with that, our *freedom to choose* what, if any, action needs to be taken.

We can regain our freedom. The first step is to simply acknowledge the actuality of the situation we are in, without immediately falling into our usual automatic tendency to judge, to fix, or to want things to be other than they are. And our home practice -The body scan exercise provides an opportunity to practise bringing an open, interested and friendly awareness to the way things are in each moment, without needing to do anything to change them. There is no goal to achieve, no special state of relaxation. On the contrary, all that is required is allowing awareness play its part.

Working with Obstacles:

Frequently, after practicing the daily meditation (bodyscan) for the first week, we begin noticing *obstacles* that seem to hinder our practice or surface repeatedly. Some are shared amongst us all, whilst other may have different experiences-Here are five obstacles that have been in people’s way for thousands of years:

1. **Sleepiness:** (falling asleep during the bodyscan, just too tired to do the practice)- Being the sleep deprived nation that we are, it’s easy to feel a bit sleepy when we come down from our busy minds. We also feel sleepy sometimes when an experience is overwhelming, *so it’s good to be curious whether the tiredness is telling you that you need more rest or that there’s a feeling that needs to be expressed.*

Helpful Hint: If it happens so not Judge or blame yourself! From time to time if you fall asleep when meditating, consider it a good nap that you needed! However, if this occurs regularly you might try keeping your eyes open during the practice, not using a blanket as it can lull us into a sense of sleep

2. **Doubt:** (Am I doing it right? What’s the point!, This is a waste of time! Is this working? I can’t do this...) The uncertainty about whether something will “work” or not often plagues us when starting out. Thoughts arise like “this can work for others, but it won’t work for me.” Sometimes doubt is healthy, teaching us to look closely at things before we buy them. But the unhealthy doubt just takes us away from experience before it teaches us anything.

Helpful Hint: We have to remember that thoughts are just thoughts- When we notice this doubt slipping in, just take note of it, perhaps even noticing the fear that is often underneath it, and then gently return back to the practice.

3. **Restlessness/Anxiousness:** (Difficulty staying with the practice or transitioning from doing into simply being mode)- Let's face it, it's hard to sit still for a period of time when the mind can be so busy. We're trained from a young age to do, do, do! The mind may rebel a bit when learning how "to be." You might catch it running through a million to-do lists and try and count the minutes until the end of the practice. This is all completely natural.

Helpful Hint- It's important to recognize that restlessness/boredom are just sensations like any other. If you look deeply at restlessness/ boredom, underneath it is often some form of anxiety/fear. But you don't need to investigate it to reduce its impact, just naming it as you recognize it can really reduce its impact. You might even *try adopting a beginner's mind and getting curious* about the sensation of restlessness. This is how you get back in the driver's seat.

4. **Aversion/Irritation:** (I don't like doing this, I don't want...) Becoming irritated happens for many reasons. Maybe we don't feel like we're having a good meditation experience or there's an annoying noise in the room or it's a secondary emotion that comes after feeling restless. In other words, we're irritated that we're so restless in the practice.

Helpful Hint: While our urge is to resist the irritation, we have to remember the old adage "**what we resist persists.**" The work here is to include it as part of the *mindful experience*. Our work is to recognize the irritation, allow it to be there and we can either investigate it deeper or watch as it naturally comes and goes.

5. **Attachment/Desire:** (I want/ I want the practice to be like it was previously...) During practice you'll notice that your mind may fall into a state of wanting to be somewhere else than where you are. Or maybe it's even more innocent of just wanting to get warm, food, water and so the mind starts drifting onto different topics. Or before you even get to practice your mind wants the room/conditions to be different than they are so you don't even get to practice. This state of mind can either stop us from practicing or ignite restlessness, irritation and others.

Helpful Hint: If the mind is busy wanting to be somewhere else during the practice, see if you can be easy on yourself, simply continuing to notice the thoughts straying and gently bringing your attention back. Be forgiving of yourself as you go and remember you can always begin again. Ref:((www.elishagoldstein.com))

The Body Scan & Attitudinal Foundations

Usually after attempting the Body Scan for 6 days, we will all have had very different experiences. For some it will have been a *pleasant* experience, for others *unpleasant*, for others it will have been *neutral*. Some people will have had consistent experiences,

others will have had wildly differing ones. Noticing the kinds of thoughts which arise while we practice the Body Scan can be very helpful in teaching us to cultivate the foundational attitudes we looked at last week.

The Body Scan is a method for helping us to be with all of our experience- it helps us to clearly see our *automatic tendency to judge every aspect of or experience* and usually to find it wanting in some way. It shows us how the judgments of the mind place a gap between where I am and where I think I should be, or where I want to be. This pattern is at the core of **stress, striving and suffering**.

Many of the thoughts which will have arisen will have been judgments. When we notice a thought such as “this is stupid” or “I can’t do this” or “what am I doing this for?” we recognise it as a **judgment**, we breathe out and let it go. If a thought such as “I’ve got lost again, I need to try harder” arises, we recognise it as **striving**, and we try to soften and let it go. It may go immediately, it may hang about and it may well come back, possibly over and over, and each time we recognise it we see it clearly for what it is and we let it go.

We let go by bringing our attention back, again and again, to the part of the body we are focusing on, or to the anchor of our breathing. Sometimes a thought arises which we may find unpleasant. Again, just notice it and bring your attention back to the body. Each time we come back to the body we come to it fresh in this moment, bringing our **beginner’s mind** to it.

Of course it requires **patience** to start again, to bring ourselves back again and again, to let go again and again, to notice the nature of our thoughts, over and over again. But when we see this as a training for the mind we recognise that all trainings take time, patience and a certain kind of persistent effort.

MIND & BODY CONNECTION:

The Body Scan is a method to help us to tune into what our senses are telling us (and what we are so often too busy to notice)!

- i) Tuning into the senses
- ii) Becoming aware of the activity of the mind / thoughts
- iii) Learning to direct our attention where we want it to go
- iv) Staying curious about our experience - beginner’s mind
- v) Doing all this while cultivating an attitude of friendliness towards ourselves and our experience

It is very important that we don't think that the Body Scan is a relaxation exercise.

It may well relax you, and it may relax you sometimes and not at other times. Neither is right or wrong.

Our job is just to pay attention to what is actually happening right here and right now.

If this means the mind is very active, like a monkey swinging from tree to tree, that's what you notice!



Image: Yogabray.com

The body scan is a way to throw open all the windows and doors and let the fresh air of awareness sweep it clean.

“Feeling” words: FREE to write some of your own! .

Impatience/wanting to stop, neutral, enjoyment/wanting to continue, release, joy, sadness, fear, grief, pride, disgust, surprise, anger, frustration, anticipation, shame, apprehensive, overwhelmed, excited, guilty, nervous, down/up, ashamed, loving, at ease, cosy, frustrated, calm, chilled, unhappy joyful depressed,,anxious, annoyed, serene, grumpy,at-one, happy, uncomfortable, worrie, lost,confused wound-up, free and easy, angry, sad, comfortable, impatient, out of control, blowing up,reactive

“Physical Sensation” words: As above feel free to add your own descriptors:- .

Tingly burning pounding throbbing trembling light/heavy tight/loose shooting stinging airy cutting tense/relaxed soft/rough prickly pulling burning vibrating cool/warm stiff/flexible numb numb achy sinking clammy/dry airy/dense shaky itchy pulsing achy dull/sharp tension open cold/hot butterflies spaciousness headache/stomach ache, panic-y, exhausted tightness (in chest, throat, gut etc.), surprise, frozen, jitteriness, dizzy, jumpy/ at ease, sleeplessness, softness...

“Thinking” words: Reviewing the past, daydreaming, Imagining the future, Thinking about others, Planning Evaluating/ analyzing, Circular thinking Wishing/hoping/comparing, Labeling/cataloguing, Judging your experience


Ref-Coming to Our Senses ©2005 Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D

Mindfulness of the Breath:

One of the first things we do in mindfulness based stress reduction is to become aware of our breath. You don't have to control your breath, just notice it. Observe, watch and feel the breath with a sense of interest. With practice you become more aware of your breathing, and in turn are able to use it to direct your awareness to different aspects of your life- i.e. to relax tense muscles, or focus on a situation that requires attention and/or help with pain, anger, or the stress of daily life.

Often we think of meditation as taking place in a beautiful, still, quiet place and that if the conditions are not right, we cannot meditate. But mindfulness is about becoming aware of what's happening right now, in the middle of "the full catastrophe". One of the ways to do this is through tuning into the breath, which is with us all the time - our anchor reconnecting us to the Now-ness in the midst of our hectic lives .

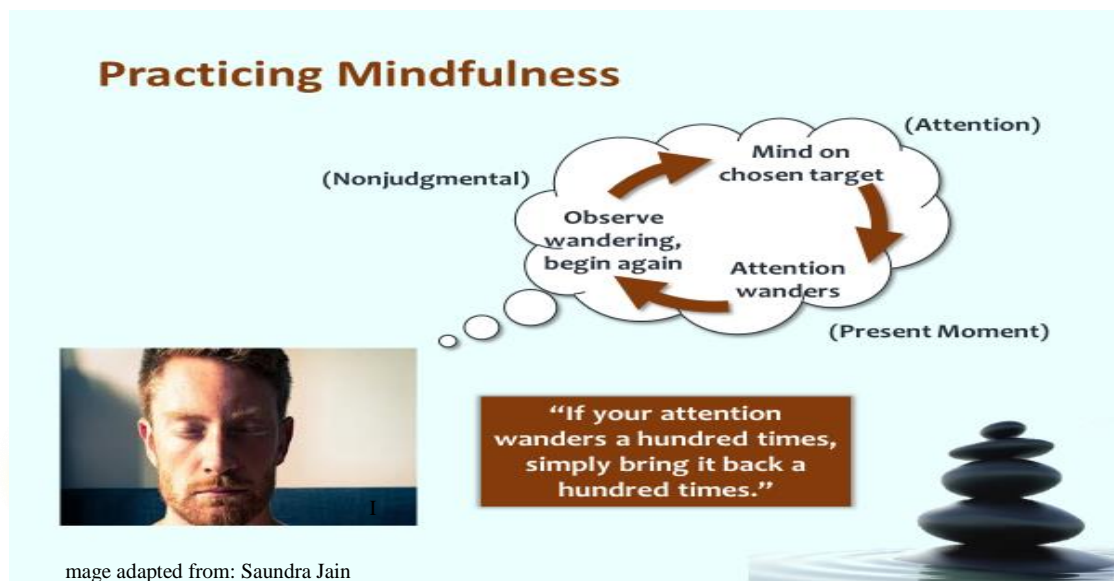
Mindfulness of Breathing - A Gateway to Awareness

- 1.** Sit in a comfortable position- so your spine is self-supporting- placing your feet, legs uncrossed flat on the floor, letting your shoulders drop.
- 2.** Close your eyes if that feels comfortable or let your gaze fall unfocused on the floor in front. 
- 3.** Bringing your attention to the sensations of contact, the weight and pressure your body makes with the chair, the contact your feet makes with the floor. Just as in the body scan spend a few moments exploring these sensations of touch.
- 4.** Bringing your focus to your breath. No need to change or control your breathing in any way. Just noticing the breath as it travels through your nostrils, into your lungs and out through your mouth. Allow yourself for a minute or two to just be with it as it is.
- 5.** Now bringing your awareness to your abdomen. As you inhale feel your tummy rising and as you exhale feel your tummy falling...rising and falling. As best you can 'being with' the changing physical sensations for the full duration of the in-breath and the out-breath- Perhaps noting the slight pauses between breathes. Riding the waves of your own breathing.
- 6.** Sooner or later (usually sooner) the mind will wander away from the breath sensation, getting caught up in thoughts, planning, the past or just aimlessly drifting away. This wandering and getting absorbed in things is what the mind does, it is not a mistake or a failure. When the mind wanders off simply noticing it and gently escorting it back to the breathing- the rise and fall of the abdomen.

7. Even if the mind wanders off a thousand times that is okay, simply bring your awareness back to your breathing. It is just as valuable to become aware that your mind wandered and to bring it back to the breathe as it is to remain aware of the breath- This noticing the wandering is actually waking up. So instead of saying “I wandered off thousands of times” we can say “I came back to the breath thousands of times.” [L] [SEP]

8. When you are ready opening your eyes if closed; knowing you can return to the awareness of your breath at any time.

Ref: Williams M, Teasdale J, Segal Z, Kabat-Zinn J. 2007 and Oscailt Mindfulness space course handbook 2007.

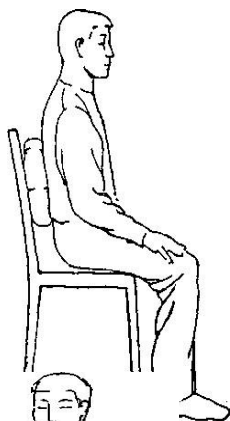


Some Practical Guidelines on Posture for Meditation on (Chair, Cushion or Stool) *
Never force /strain to get into these positions (listening to the intuition of your body)

- Having a Firm Base
- Being Comfortable
- Being Relaxed-Alert (wakeful)



Options for sitting using a Chair (USED for this Course)



1. Use a straight back chair- Try sitting away from the back of the chair (Spine upright, head aligned with shoulders, shoulders relaxed and eyes gazing softly in front of you)-Feel free to use a cushion/rolled up yoga mat to support the lower back

2. Legs uncrossed with feet flat on the ground (Place a blanket/cushion under feet if the chair is too high)

3. Hands resting gently in the lap or on the knees.

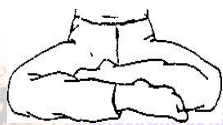
*Using a Cushion *(if cushion too low- you will tend to Bow & if too high you will tend to Arch- both leading to pain- So please ensure you are self-supported in a position that works for you)*



Ideally both Knees should be in contact with the floor-having the knees lower than the hips helps support the back as in option A

If you choose to sit cross-legged the following may be of help-

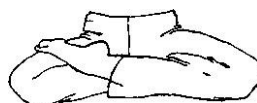
*(d & e) are advanced options and only recommend after prolonged years of practice.



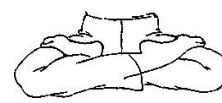
(b) 1 leg in front of other



(c) 1 front on calf



(d) 1 foot on thigh



(e) Lotus Position

The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting their bad advice –
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!” each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.

You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.

But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company

as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life you could save.

by Mary Oliver

HOME PRACTICE FOR WEEK 2

1. Do the Body Scan 6 out of 7 days. Use the Wk 2 record sheet.
2. Once a day practice 10 mins of Mindfulness Breathing- this provides an opportunity to become aware of what it feels like to be connected and present in the moment without having to do anything.
3. See if you can begin to notice the feelings, bodily sensations and thoughts that arise for you in different situations in your life, as in the “Walking Down the Street” exercise.
4. Do the Pleasant Events Diary each day- become really aware of the thoughts, feelings, and body sensations that are there.
5. Choose a new routine activity to be especially mindful of (brushing teeth, washing dishes, taking a shower, taking out rubbish, reading to children, shopping, eating, driving etc).
6. Continue developing and cultivating mindfulness of eating and drinking.



- **NOTE- Try to wear warm, comfortable clothes for next session: Week 3 for Mindful Movement.**

Home Practice Record Form—Session 2

Record on the Home Practice Record Form each time you practice. Also, make a note of anything that comes up in the home practice, so that we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Day/date	Practice (Yes/No)	Comments
Wednesday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Thursday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Friday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Saturday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Sunday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Monday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Tuesday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	
Wednesday Date:	Body scan: Breath: Everyday mindfulness:	

Pleasant Events Diary – Week 2

Be aware of a pleasant event *at the time it is happening*. Use these questions to focus your attention on the details of the experience as it is happening. Write it down later.

What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now, as you write this down?
<i>driving home/ hearing a bird sing.</i>	Yes.	Lightness across the face, aware of shoulders dropping, uplift of corners of mouth.	Relief, pleasure, "That's good" "How lovely (the bird)", "it's so nice to be outside."	It was such a small thing but I'm glad I noticed it.
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				
Day 7				