

Mindfulness Practice Exercises

Concentrated Practice –5 Senses

(can be spoken / recorded as a script)

Sit or lie in a comfortable place. You may soften your gaze or close your eyes. Start with bringing your attention to your breath. Breathe deeply into your belly, expanding your diaphragm counting four beats in through your nose, PAUSE and four beats out through your mouth. It may help to place your hands over the base of your ribs and feel the expansion in and out.

Do three or four cycles or until you can stay focussed on just noticing your breathing without your mind wandering off.

Breathe IN, two, three, four PAUSE *and OUT*, two, three, four. *In*, two, three, four.....

Keep breathing.

Now tune your ears into **sounds** you can hear. Observe the sounds around you, without deciding if you like the sound or not. Label the sound, noticing ones that are close, ones that are far away, ones that are continuous, ones that are intermittent... Continue to notice sounds for a few minutes.....

If your mind wanders off from what you are focussing on or if you start to negatively label or judge a sensation, bring your attention back to your breath for a few cycles, to reconnect with the present moment.

Now connect with your **taste**. Don't judge the taste as pleasant or unpleasant, just notice how your mouth feels. You may like to move your tongue around to explore your mouth. Continue for a few minutes to notice.

Now tune into your **touch**. Feel different parts of your body in contact with where you are sitting. How your skin feels against the things it is in contact with – clothing, the angle you are sitting or lying, the cushioning or hardness under your body. Sense your muscles and how they feel, sense your bones and if any are pressing against a surface. Notice whether you feel relaxed or heavy or tight. Notice the parts of you that are in contact with the ground. Let yourself gain a sense on grounding and of gravity.

Now tune into your **smell** and notice what aromas, smells and fragrances are around you. Label what you can smell. Try to detect different smells, ones that are strong, ones that are faint, ones that stand out and ones that you have to breathe deeply to detect. Notice that the more you focus the more you may notice.

And now open your eyes and pick something you can **see**. Just focus your gaze on that particular thing. Notice if it is close to your or in the distance. Notice its colour. Notice its shape and form. Notice if there is any movement, notice if it has any function.

Now complete your five-sense practice with another cycle of breathing with your eyes open and acquaint yourself with your surroundings.

Life flow practice



Throughout your day incorporate the practice of noticing and engaging fully with what you are doing, seeing, feeling, sensing, smelling, tasting, touching and hearing. Here are some ideas to intentionally engage with the present:

- Stop and smell a flower or examine the spine in a leaf;
- Touch the bark of a tree, feel the sensation of soil or sand running through your hands or between your toes
- Listen to the musical tune or tweets of different birds, a child's excited squeal or laugh, the hum of an appliance and other sounds that are the steady soundtrack in the background
- Note what something feels like to touch – the feel of your clothes on your body, stretchy, woolly, silky, light, heavy. Do you experience any emotions when engaging with the fabric – the sensuality of silk, the flexibility and firmness of workout tights, the formality and professionalism of workwear, the femininity of a flowing fabric, the strength, support and sound of a leather boot; the anticipation of an exciting event when wearing formal attire...
- Stroke the fur or feathers of an animal. Engage with the feel on your fingertips and palms of your hands
- Breathe in the aroma of your coffee, tea, wine, spirit, beer or food – can you detect particular essences or notes?
- Notice the texture and temperature of something you are eating while stopping to enjoy and notice taste
- Feel the sensation of a full belly or the quench of thirst
- Notice the emotions stirred by music, the reverberation of rhythm and percussion, the length and pitch of notes
- Breathe in the crisp fresh morning air and the smell of dew on the grass, the rising humidity in the air or the ice chill
- Breathe in the smell and moisture of rain or the aroma of freshly mowed grass or recently turned soil;
- While exercising, notice how your heartbeat and muscles feel, imagine the muscle working and the blood flowing through your body. Immerse yourself in feelingspent or invigorated after exercise
- Take some breaths to centre yourself while having a shower – feel the warm, hot or cold sluicing of water running over your body, breathing in the aroma of soap and the mist of the water.
- Feel the soft lull of heavy lids that usher in sleep.

It really is simple but also quite profound. Life has become so busy that we run on autopilot, going through the motions, letting slip by un-noticed, the simple things in life.

