

“Tour of the Senses” Guided Practice

Being mindful of the world around us naturally calms the mind. In this practice, we’ll use the senses – what we see, what we hear, and what we feel – to be mindful and to strengthen our ability to direct and sustain attention.

Let’s start with the posture. Bring a light awareness to your body to begin here and sit upright in a comfortable posture.

Now, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. As you breathe out, let your body and mind relax. Let your breathing return to normal and direct your attention to the sensations in your body. Notice any feelings of tension or feelings of ease and relaxation. Notice the feelings of the breath and any other sensations in the body. We’re not trying to feel any particular way here, just noticing – being curious about the sensations that are happening in the body.

Next, bring attention to what sounds that are present right now. Don’t concentrate too intently. Just direct your attention to a sound and let your awareness relax into that sound. When the mind wanders off, gently bring it back. Direct your attention to whatever sounds are present and let sound be an anchor for your attention.

Now, you can gently open your eyes and direct your attention to what you see. Pick something in your visual field and rest your awareness on it. Again, don’t concentrate too intensely here. Let your mind be relaxed but still alert and attentive.

Don’t worry if the mind gets distracted. When it does, bring it back to the object and start again.

OK, now bring your attention back to the body. Gently close your eyes and direct your attention to the sensations in your abdomen. Sustain your attention on the feeling of movement in your abdomen as you breathe in and out.

Now let go and rest in open awareness. Here you don't have to do anything. You don't have to pay attention or stop the mind from paying attention. You don't have to control the mind in any way. Just notice what happens in this present moment.

Next, bring awareness to the sounds that are present. Don't try to force your mind to be still. Just retain a thread of awareness as you direct your attention to sound.

For the last few moments, relax your attentional focus and rest in open awareness. Don't worry about what's happening in the mind. Just let what you see, hear, and feel wash over you. Just let your mind do whatever it naturally does but remain present and aware.

OK, that's it. Before you continue on with your day, set a clear intention to keep practicing.

You can use any object of the senses to strengthen mindfulness and your capacity to direct and sustain attention. The key is to practice in short moments, many times throughout your day.

Courtesy [*Cortland Dahl*](#) and [*Healthy Minds Innovations*](#)