

Week One: Mindful Presence (13 minutes)

0:01: Start by acknowledging to yourself that you've set aside this time to practice being mindful and that by taking this time, you are actively participating in your own health and well-being, which will benefit you and those around you. Now, taking a slightly deeper inhale and then a slightly deeper exhale, inviting your body to soften as much as is possible at this moment. Making any final adjustments to find a comfortable and wakeful posture so that you can begin this meditation period. Deciding now if you'd like your eyes open with a soft gaze and a sense of your peripheral vision or allowing your eyes to gently close if you feel safe enough.

01:09: And let's begin by checking in with your internal experience. How is your body feeling in this moment? How is your mood? How is the quality of your mind? Perhaps active with lots of thoughts, or maybe fairly still and quiet. And it's not that there is a good or a bad experience or something that you're looking for in particular. You're just checking in, sensing your internal experience however it is for you right now.

02:06: Now, start by taking a few moments to sweep your attention gently through your body to help you settle more and more into the present moment. So first, you can notice your face and sense if you're holding any particular expression on your face. You might notice a little bit of holding in your eyebrows or your forehead, might be around your eyes or the mouth. And with your attention, inviting your face to be relaxed, not needing to express anything in this moment, having a neutral effect. So your forehead can soften. Tiny muscles around your eyes can relax. And you can even notice the space of your mouth so that your jaw can settle into a little bit more ease.

03:33: Now from your face, you can shift your attention to your shoulders. Checking in to see if it feels like you're carrying anything. Like many of the old stories, we sometimes carry our burdens on our back. So take a moment to imagine that you're setting down any burdens and inviting your shoulders to soften as much as possible in this moment.

[15 second pause]

04:20: And now shifting your attention from your shoulders through your torso and into the lower half of your body. Noticing your pelvis, your legs, and your feet. Allow yourself to notice the steadiness and stability of the chair and the floor. With your attention, see if you can consciously receive the steadiness and stability softening your body into receiving the support perhaps by relaxing your posture a bit and noticing that there is the steady base that's supporting your posture.

[15 second pause]

05:29: Now from the base of your posture, shifting your attention to your belly. Noticing if you're holding your belly. Often, we hold our belly unconsciously. And so in this moment, inviting your belly to be soft and loose letting it really hang out. And as you do this, you'll naturally notice the movement of your belly. This is diaphragmatic breathing. With each inhale, you'll feel your belly inflate and with each exhale, you'll feel your belly fall. So resting your attention with the felt sense of your gentle breathing belly. And you don't need to change or control your breath. You're tuning into the natural rhythm and the felt sense of your soft belly breathing.

[30 second pause]

08:22: Now you're likely to notice that at times, your attention is pulled into some other experience. Might be thoughts and emotion or a sound, or some other experience. If your attention gets pulled away, then you get to practice kindness and patience. So not needing to pull the mind back. Rather gently reconnecting with the felt sense of your soft breathing belly.

[30 second pause]

09:33: If you notice that it is a little bit difficult to keep your attention with your breathing, then you might try opening the field of your attention a bit wider to notice your entire body, and let your breath fade into the background. Resting your attention with all of the changing sensations that are held within an open, receptive, and kind attention. Feeling the changing sensations of your body from the inside, moment to moment.

[30 second pause]

12:39: Sometimes being in the body can feel like too much, and if it feels this way, then you can allow your attention to open even wider to resting with hearing. Noticing all of the sounds, the sound of my voice, other sounds in the environment, and as much as you can, resting your attention with the process of hearing. The changing flow of sound moment to moment with this open, receptive, and gentle attention. Now let's practice in silence for a while, choosing whichever practice you like, and remembering that there's nowhere to go and you're simply returning with kindness and patience each time your attention drifts.

[1:42 minute pause]

So in these last few moments, appreciating that you've taken this time to be mindful. Perhaps ending this meditation session by setting the intention to carry this state of wakefulness and presence into the rest of your day.