



This handout provides a script for a body scan exercise, a distress tolerance skill in Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Click the link or scan the QR code here to access a [video](#) of the same script.



*Intro: Welcome to this body scan exercise. I'm Dr. Elizabeth Nick from ChoosingTherapy.com, and I'll be guiding you through this practice.*

We have two goals for this body scan. The first is to tune into the body nonjudgmentally. Many of us ignore our body sensations. Or, sometimes we become overwhelmed by body sensations, especially those of us who experience frequent physical pain or discomfort. Our aim is to check in with the body and notice sensations, just with curiosity and interest. This attitude helps us practice calm, mindful observation.

The second goal is to practice bringing the attention back to the breath and the body when we get distracted. This is super common, even for people who do mindfulness meditations a lot. Today we'll also be training that attention muscle.

Okay. Start by making sure you are sitting or lying comfortably. Uncross your legs and let your hands rest by your side, on your torso, or on your lap with your palms up. Close your eyes or lower your gaze. Take a deep breath in... then out.

Let's start with your toes. Imagine your breath and your attention flowing down to the toes of each foot. Get curious. What are you feeling there? Do they feel tingly? Cold? Heavy? Just take a moment to notice your toes.

Now move up to your feet. Take a deep breath in and envision the breath flowing to your feet. What do your feet feel like? Where are your feet meeting the floor? Does your skin feel warm or cold there? What do your arches feel like? Give a moment of attention to the sensations in both feet.

When you're naming the sensations you feel, remember to do so with interest, not judgment. Don't worry or judge yourself if your muscles feel tired. We're not counting up points for every relaxed or energetic muscle group. Just take note.

Next are the lower legs. Feel your breath circle around your calves and ankles. Do you feel energy in your calves and ankles? Maybe soreness? Relaxation? Just take a moment here at the lower legs.

*\*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



If you find your attention wandering, just gently bring it back to your legs.

Now move up to your knees and thighs. Send your attention and breath there. Do your knees feel loose or tight? Do your quads feel any different from your hamstrings? What is the feeling of your clothes against your legs? Take a few more moments to focus on your knees and thighs.

Next are the pelvis and hips. Bring your breath and focus there. Do your hips feel light? Heavy? Tight? Relaxed? Remember that you don't need to judge yourself, just observe.

Now let's move to the lower back. Breathe in and imagine all your breath flowing into your lower back. Does it feel warm or cool? Maybe springy and light or dense and heavy? Just focus on any sensations you find there.

How about your stomach? Expand your diaphragm as you breathe in. Feel your diaphragm sink back down as you breathe out. Just focus on how your stomach gently rises and falls with each breath and the sensations that come with it.

Let's focus on the chest. Send your breath there and feel the walls of your chest expand. How does your breath feel there? Calming? Refreshing? Do you notice your heart beating? Just take a moment focusing on the chest.

Remember that we're just noting how things feel. We're not even purposely trying to relax any muscles with this exercise. Just practicing nonjudgmental observation.

Now let's move to the hands. Imagine your breath flowing out to your fingertips. Do your hands feel dry or clammy? Are your fingers curled or relaxed? Just get curious about the sensations there.

Give your attention to your shoulders and neck. Breathe into this area. Do you feel tightness or looseness? Warmth or coolness? Does anything feel stiff? Think about how you would describe the sensations there.

Now let's go to the lower face. Take stock of your chin, jaw, and mouth. Is your jaw loose or clenched? How do your lips feel? Notice the position of your tongue and teeth. Breathe in and focus your mind on the bottom half of your face.

Just a few more spaces left. Remember that mindfulness isn't perfect concentration - it's just the ability to gently redirect your attention.

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# Body Scan Mindfulness Script

Now focus on the feeling of the breath going through your nose. Does the breath feel cooler when you breathe in, or breathe out? Where in your nose can you feel the air moving the most? Does breathing feel different now that you're focusing your attention on your nose?

Next, imagine your breath flowing to your cheeks, eyes, temples, and forehead. Does your face feel warm? Is there tension in your temples? Is your forehead relaxed? Don't judge, just notice.

Finally, take notice of your scalp. Feel your head press into the surface it's resting on. Bring your awareness to the very top of your head. Hold your scalp in your awareness, then - let it go.

Take a few deep breaths. Open your eyes, wiggle your fingers and toes, and gently move your joints.

Great job. Every time you practice this body scan, you build your skills in mindfulness and nonjudgmental observation.





# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



**325+**  
Companies Reviewed



**3,625+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,545+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.





# Tools for Self-Assessment and Psychoeducation

Figuring out the next step in your mental health journey can be overwhelming. Developed by psychologists, the tools at [ChoosingTherapy.com](https://www.ChoosingTherapy.com) can help. Our mental health self-assessment quizzes can help you explore common symptoms of mental health concerns, as well as find the best therapy style for you. Our mental health worksheets can guide you through therapy concepts and how to use them in your life.

## [Learn More with Mental Health Quizzes](#)

Our collection of psychologist-developed mental health quizzes can help you learn if you are experiencing mild, moderate, or concerning levels of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and more. Each quiz also provides targeted resources based on your answers. These self-assessments are designed to offer insight, not diagnoses, and can be a helpful first step in recognizing symptoms and deciding whether to seek further support. If you have concerns about your mental health or your quiz results, we recommend you reach out to a licensed mental health professional.



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