

Mindful Walking

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Today we will practice a walking meditation (2 seconds).

First find a place for your mindful walking practice (2 seconds).

Its simplest to start where you are right now.

Find a place to walk that allows you to listen safely to the instructions, perhaps a smooth path without traffic (5 seconds).

Before you start walking take a moment and notice yourself standing (2 seconds).

Feel your feet on the ground (2 seconds).

Notice how you're standing (5 seconds).

Just as we do with sitting meditation, invite your spine to lengthen and your shoulders to soften (5 seconds).

Stand in a way that feels upright, relaxed, and present (5 seconds).

Bring attention to your breath (2 seconds).

Take a deep breath in (2 seconds)

and a long slow breath out (5 seconds).

Notice where you are (2 seconds),

what sensations you are experiencing (2 seconds),

what do you see in front of you? (5 seconds)

Perhaps a specific color (2 seconds), or a shape there (2 seconds).

What sounds do you hear? (5 seconds)

Can you feel warmth or coolness? (5 seconds)

Is there a breeze or is the air still? (5 seconds)

What sensations do you notice in your body? (5 seconds)

Now consciously begin walking at whatever pace feels right to you. (10 seconds)

Can you notice the physical sensation of lifting your foot (2 seconds)

the sensation of your foot making contact with the ground? (10 seconds)

Continue walking for a few minutes, focusing on the very particular experience of your foot making contact with the ground. (5 seconds)

If it helps you can say to yourself, contact (2 seconds),

contact (2 seconds), contact (2 seconds). (5 seconds)

Begin to widen the focus of your awareness to include the experience of your whole body walking. (5 seconds)

What does it feel like for the body to move in this way? (2 seconds)

What are the range of sensations you are experiencing? (5 seconds)

Now while still being aware of your body, expand your awareness even further. (5 seconds)

Include the range of everything you're experiencing in your environment from sights and sounds, to smells, and sensations. (5 seconds)

Can you be fully aware and present of walking in the middle of this very dynamic experience. (10 seconds)

Continue walking in this way as long as you like (5 seconds).

You may try alternating your focus from the contact of your feet on the ground to being aware of your whole body (2 seconds),

to being aware of the wider environment (2 seconds)

or simply pausing to appreciate something in your path (15 seconds).

When you're ready to finish (2 seconds), come back to standing still. (10 seconds)

Finish with a full deep breath in (2 seconds)

and a long slow breath out. (5 seconds)

ding (15 seconds).

Guidance on Teaching the Mindful Walking Exercise

There are key learning features to this exercise.

- Arriving in the present moment
- Experiencing awareness of the body in motion
- Focusing attention to internal and external experience
- Relating to the body with friendliness
- Noticing patterns and habitual tendencies
- Working with physical boundaries offering a parallel to working with emotional experience
- Experiencing that physical experience can change emotional experience
- Learning new ways of taking care of ourselves

Considerations when Guiding the Mindful Walking Exercise

- Clear and concise guidance on ways of working with physical boundaries and safety at the beginning of practice
- Offering guidance on:
 - Potential adaptations for their own bodies/physical needs
 - Reminders for awareness of sensation and experience
 - Reminders to be safe
- Guiding participants to breathe in and out as they move
- Encouraging participants to breathe fully and freely in the ways that feel most natural as they walk
- Encouraging participants to explore and discover the edge between exploring, discovering, accepting, and being with sensation

Inquiry and Dialogue

- Noticing how the belly, chest and head feel
- Noticing the motions that are associated with these visceral feelings
- Invite discovery of the self-awareness during movement
- Dialogue on the how the experience of walking shifts when attending to the feet on the ground
- Linking. Explore how shifting attention to finding the feel impacts attention, energy, or focus
- Guide participants to identify times of the day and locations where they might practice mindful walking

Integrated Practice:

Find your feet. While in a meeting or giving a presentation (or just in a conversation with someone today), rest some attention on the sensations of the feet making contact with the ground to bring the mind and body back together and recenter.

Self-Assessment

Refer to the Mindfulness Teaching Self-Assessment Rubric, taking evidence of your execution of this exercise using this guidance and asking yourself the questions embedded in the tool. Identify your strengths and areas in need of learning improvement. Rate your competency in this event. Use this information to plan for and execute your next teaching of the exercise.

(Guidance adapted from <http://mbitac.bangor.ac.uk/mbitac-tool.php.en>)