

Meditation: Awareness of Body and Breath Transcript

Hi, I'm Nadia Stolpner and I work as a Counsellor at George Brown College. I'd like to share with you two simple meditation practices: awareness of body and breathing.

It can be easy to feel stressed and overwhelmed.

There are lots of easy ways to help the nervous system relax.

A brief **body awareness meditation** could be one tool to feel more grounded, relaxed, and present.

The second brief meditation practice I'd like to share is **awareness of breath**.

Breathing can reflect our mood and can help us change it. When someone is feeling anxious, the breathing can often be shallow, mainly noticed in the area on the chest. When someone is feeling more relaxed, the breathing can be felt more in the areas of the belly and the diaphragm. Deeper relaxed breathing can help us feel more relaxed and at ease.

A couple of words on self-care

There are different kinds of meditations. With these two practices I want to share with you, there is no one right way to practice. There are lots of right ways. I invite you to listen to what feels good to you and make changes that suit you.

For example, you can open the eyes, you can stretch, you can shift attention to another area of the body, change the words even, or simply discontinue the practice at any time.

And as with any awareness practice, when we are present with the breath and with our experience in the body, one can become more aware of what is here: this could include emotions, thoughts, or memories.

Because of this some breathing practices may at times be not a good fit. If it feels overwhelming or stressful, you can simply open your eyes, stretch, and discontinue the practice at any time. There may also be a different way to practice that may feel better for you. If you have questions, you can talk with a GBC counsellor.

Here I'd like to share body and breath awareness meditations that I enjoy and that many students I work with found helpful in reducing stress. Please participate as much or as little as you want.

Meditation

I invite you to find a comfortable way to be, whether sitting, lying down or standing.

If sitting, I invite you to plant the feet on the ground, not crossing them, allowing the back to be upright and comfortable, allowing the hands to gently rest in your lap.

Allowing the eyes to gently close, or if it feels more comfortable, you can open them a bit, focussing your gaze on a spot on the ground in front of you.

And taking a moment to notice the feet on the ground. Extending a warm welcome to this area of the feet. Noticing any sensations that are here in the area of the feet. Maybe they feel warm or cool, maybe you notice socks or shoes here?

Can you feel the contact with the floor or the ground? Maybe taking a moment to gently press into the floor. What is the surface of the ground like? Is it soft or hard? Is it smooth or bumpy? Perhaps noticing the floor or the ground is holding you up.

And when feeling ready, I invite you to also notice the contact with the chair or the surface that you are sitting or lying on. Maybe you can feel your body pressing into the surface of what is holding you. Maybe you can notice the texture of this surface. Just noticing being held and supported by this surface.

Is there any tiny shift in your posture that is wanted for you to feel even more comfortable and supported in your sitting? Is there any tiny shift that is wanted to allow your breath to flow more easily? Is there any tension in your body that perhaps may want to let go of even a little bit?

Extending kindness to your experience just as it is.

As we are sitting here, aware of the feet on the ground, aware of the support of the chair, if you'd like, I invite you to place one hand on the area of your heart and another on the area of your belly or anywhere else on your body where that feels comfortable to you.

Taking a moment to notice the support of the hands. Noting the temperature: are the hands warm or cool? Maybe pausing here for a moment to notice a sense of your own good will and kindness coming from the centre of the hands towards you.

And here we are, **present with supports**: aware of the feet planted on the ground, the ground holding you up, the chair, the hands.

I'd like to offer us a two-minute **breathing meditation**.

When you are ready, I invite you to bring both hands to your belly or to a place on your body where you notice your breath more easily and comfortably.

And just pausing here and noticing slight movements of the hands and how these movements are in sync with the breath. Hands gently moving out on the in breath and gently moving in on the exhale. Noticing sensations of the movement of breath.

I invite us to take longer slower breaths to nourish the body with breath. As you feel comfortable, taking a longer breath in through the nose, and allowing an even longer exhale through the mouth. A long, relaxed breath in through the nose and allowing an even longer exhale through the mouth. Just being breathed. Receiving breath. Nourishing, relaxing breath.

When you are ready, allowing the breathing to return to a natural pace.

Taking your time, and when you are feeling ready, noticing the feet on the ground and finding a way to stretch that feels good for you. And maybe allowing a sense of gratitude for being able to breathe, to sense, and for anything else.

If you'd like, **taking a moment to extend good wishes to other beings and to the Earth**. If you want, simply saying may they be well.

As this meditation comes to conclusion, I invite you to notice how you are feeling. Do you notice any changes? Maybe there is a sense of ease, softening, opening, or maybe tiredness, or anything else that you notice?

I invite you to extend kindness to your experience just as it is.

When we notice what is here, it can be easier to know what we need.

Anytime you can always pause and become aware of these friends of the support of the ground, support of what you are sitting or standing on, and the support of your hands, as well as the slower, deeper breaths.

Thanks very much for practising with me.

There are some **resources** I would like to share with you.

If you have questions or if you would like support with these meditations, you are welcome to email letstalk@georgebrown.ca. That is our Counselling Services email address.

We also have live meditation practices where GBC students and counsellors get together to practice mindfulness meditations and discuss their experience. You are welcome to visit the counselling website and look for the webinars tab. There you will find a sign-up page with dates and times and can register for the live practices.

If you would like to meet with a counsellor one-on-one, you can book a meeting on our website and of course you can email letstalk@georgebrown.ca.

There is also a 24/7 phone number for support for college students. It is 1-866-925-5454.

You can find more meditations on the websites listed here.

Thank you very much for practising with me today. I hope you have a great day.