

Summary of Session 3: **Gathering the Scattered Mind**

This week, we continue to cultivate awareness of the breath and the body in movement. The mind is often scattered and lost in thought because it is working away in the background to complete unfinished tasks from the past and strive for goals for the future. We need to find a reliable way intentionally to “come back” to the here and now. The breath and body offer an ever-present focus on which we can reconnect with mindful presence, gather and settle the mind, and ease ourselves from ‘doing’ into ‘being’.

Focusing on the breath:

- Brings you back to this very moment—the *here and now*.
- Is always available as an anchor and *haven*, no matter where you are.
- Can actually change your experience by connecting you with a wider space and broader perspective from which to view things.

This is an important step towards being able to respond helpfully to painful emotions. Emotions express themselves in the body. So becoming more aware of what is happening in the body fine tunes our sensitivity to subtle shades of mood.

This may not at first be easy. If we have experienced painful feelings in the past, it is understandable that emotions like fear or unhappiness feel like threats to be avoided – by walling them off, suppressing them, numbing out, pretending they are not there. But if we disconnect from painful feelings and body sensations, then we cannot respond to them effectively. And our ability to feel anything at all – positive or negative – may become muted, so that we lose touch with the full experience of being alive.

Attempting to avoid emotions, thoughts and body sensations can become a habit. We may believe it protects us – but research has shown that avoiding unpleasant feelings actually keeps them going. They are still there, even if we are not aware of them. They indirectly influence our attitudes and judgements in ways that can turn passing unpleasant feelings into persistent suffering, *unless we are aware*. But when ‘tuning out’ has become a habit, how can we learn to tune back in, without being overwhelmed?

A first step is to learn to tune into body sensations and feelings, just as we did in the Body Scan. This opens opportunities to respond more effectively to unpleasant emotions as they arise. This week we focus on *mindful movement*, on the sensations of the breath, and on a 3-minute meditation we can use to step out of automatic pilot at any time.

Mindful movement allows us to:

- Build on the foundation of the body scan in learning how we can bring awareness to and “inhabit” body experience/sensation.
- See old habitual patterns of the mind—especially those that emphasize *striving*.
- Work with physical boundaries and intensity and learn acceptance of our limits.
- Learn new ways of taking care of ourselves.

The movements provide a direct way to connect with awareness of the body. The body is a place where emotions are often expressed, under the surface and without our awareness. So becoming more aware of the body gives us an additional place from which to stand and look at our thoughts

Through mindful movement, we learn to recognise body sensations for what they are – sensations that arise and pass away. To do this, we need to become aware of fearful thoughts that might lead us to pull back from sensation. Let’s say, for example, that we choose to deliberately hold a mindful stretch for longer than feels comfortable. Can we welcome and stay in contact with the sensations, even if we find them unpleasant? Can we notice the impulse to label them as ‘pain’ and just let them be as they are?

By turning towards discomfort and unpleasantness, holding them in awareness as they arise, we are expanding the heart qualities of openness and goodwill in ourselves. Thus we weaken our tendency to avoid internal experiences that we do not like. Physical movement offers many opportunities to bring a spirit of gentleness, kindness and compassion to ourselves – rather than pushing beyond our limits, or being critical of our ‘performance’.

Mindfulness Standing Postures (Stretch and Breath)

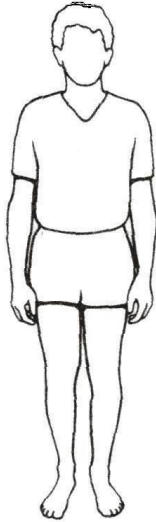


Figure a

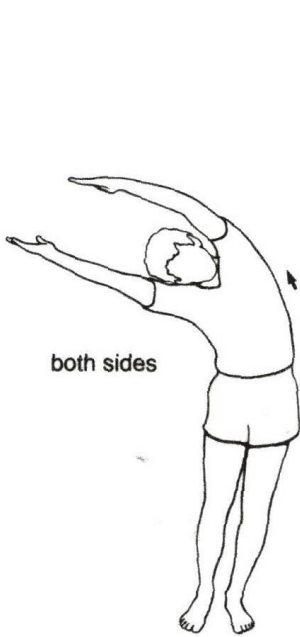
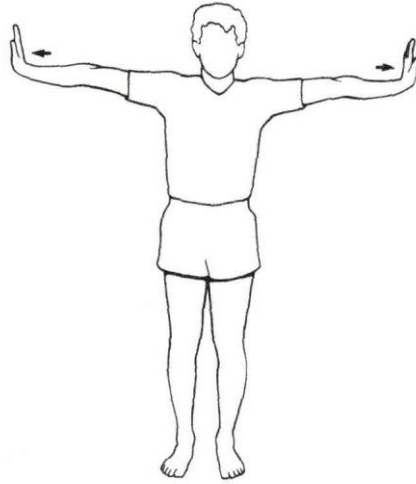


Figure b

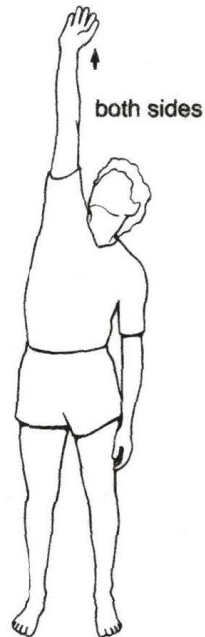


Figure c

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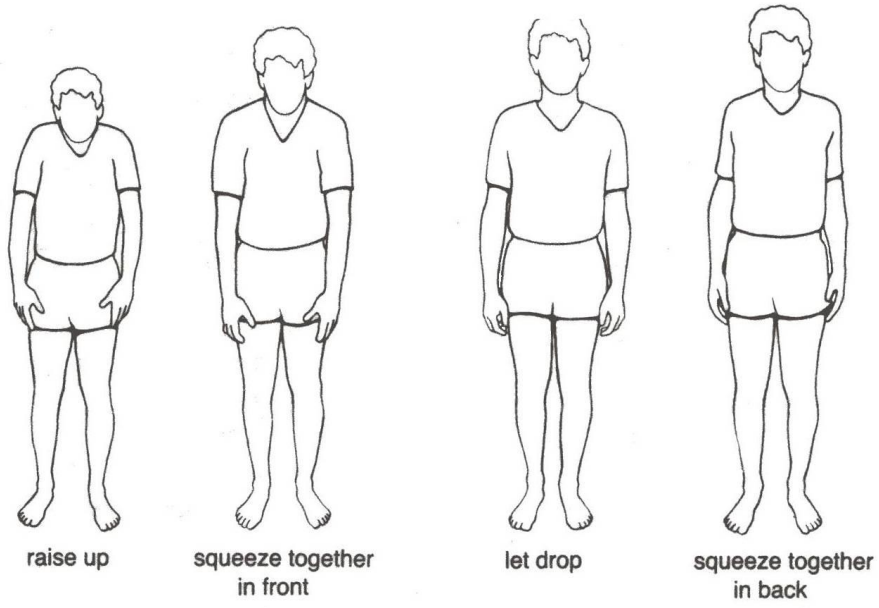


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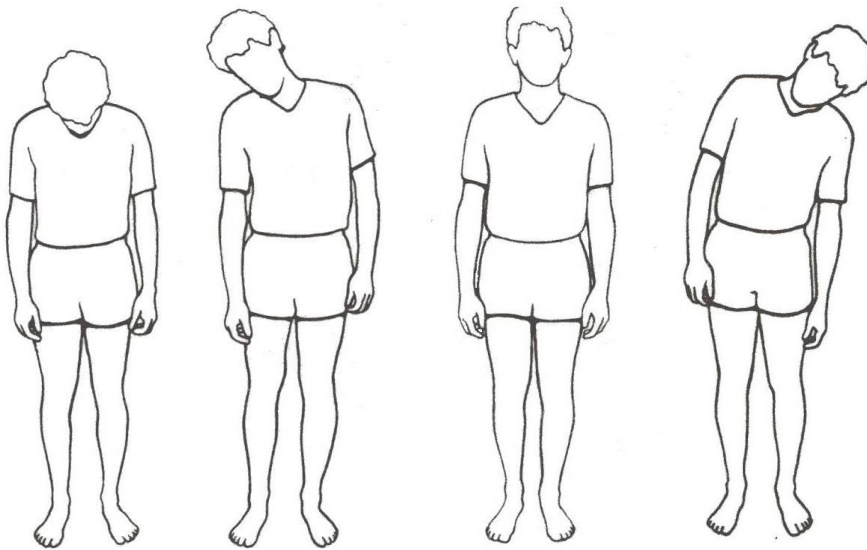


Figure e

Sitting Meditation: Mindfulness of the Breath and Body

1. Practice mindfulness of the breath, as described earlier, for 10-15 minutes.
2. When you feel reasonably settled on awareness of the breath, intentionally allow the awareness to expand around the breath to include, as well, a sense of physical sensations throughout the whole body. While still aware, in the background, of the movements of the breath in the lower abdomen, change your primary focus so that you become aware of a sense of the body as a whole and of the changing patterns of sensation throughout the body. You may find you get a sense of the movements of the breath throughout the body, as if the whole body were breathing.
3. If you choose, include together with this wider sense of the body as a whole, and of the breath moving to and fro, awareness of the more local, particular patterns of physical sensations that arise where the body makes contact with the floor, chair, cushion, or stool - the sensations of touch, pressure, or contact of the feet or knees with the floor, the buttocks with whatever supports them, the hands where they rest on the thighs, or on each other. As best you can, hold all these sensations, together with the sense of the breath and of the body as a whole, in a wider space of awareness of physical sensations.
4. The mind will wander repeatedly away from the breath and body sensations - this is natural, to be expected, and in no way a mistake or a failure. Whenever you notice that your awareness has drifted away from sensations in the body, you might want to congratulate yourself; you have "woken up." Softly note where the mind was ("thinking"), and kindly escort your focus of attention back to the movements of the breath and to a sense of the body as a whole.
5. As best you can, keep things simple, bringing a gentle attending to the actuality of sensations throughout the body from one moment to the next.
6. As you sit, there may be some sensations that are particularly intense, such as pains in the back or knees or shoulders, and you may find that awareness is repeatedly drawn to these sensations, and away from your intended focus on the breath or body as a whole. You may like to use these times to experiment with intentionally bringing the focus of awareness right into the region of intensity and, as best you can, exploring with gentle and wise attention the detailed pattern of sensations there - what, precisely, do the sensations feel like, where, exactly, are they, do they vary over time or from one part of the region of intensity to another? Not so much thinking about it, as just feeling it. You may like to use the breath as a vehicle to carry awareness into such regions of intensity, "breathing in" to them, just as in the body scan.
7. Whenever you find yourself "carried away" from awareness in the moment by the intensity of physical sensations, or in any other way, reconnect with the here-and-now by refocusing awareness on the movements of the breath or on a sense of the body as a whole. Once you have gathered yourself in this way, allow the awareness to expand once more so it includes a sense of sensations throughout the body.

The Three-Minute Breathing Space

Basic Instructions

Step 1. Becoming Aware

Becoming more aware of how things are in this moment by deliberately adopting an erect and dignified posture, whether sitting or standing and if possible, closing your eyes. Then bringing your awareness to your inner experience and acknowledging it, asking yourself:

- What **Thoughts** are going through the mind (images and memories)?
- What **Feelings** are here?
- What **Body Sensations** are here right now?

This is my experience right now, whether I like it or not and whether I want it or not.

Step 2. Gathering

Then redirecting your attention to focus on the **physical sensations of the breathing in the abdomen**...rising and falling. Following the breath all the way in and all the way out and using the breathing to anchor yourself in the present.



Step 3. Expanding

Then expanding the field of awareness around the breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture and facial expression. Bring this wider awareness to the next moment in your day.

The breathing space provides a way to step out of Automatic Pilot mode and reconnect with the present moment. The key skill in using Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy is to maintain awareness in the moment. Nothing else.

Mindfulness of the Body in Movement: Lying Down Postures (Yoga)



Figure 1.

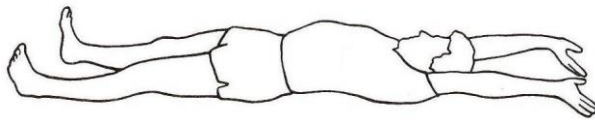


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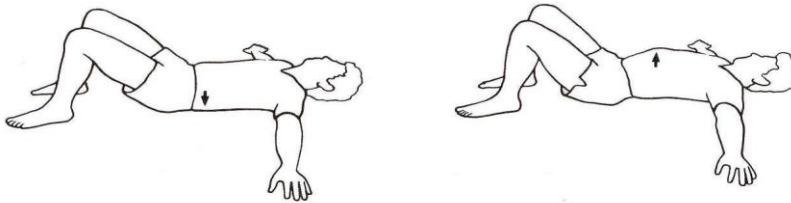


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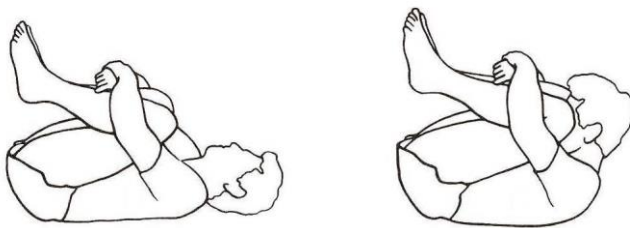


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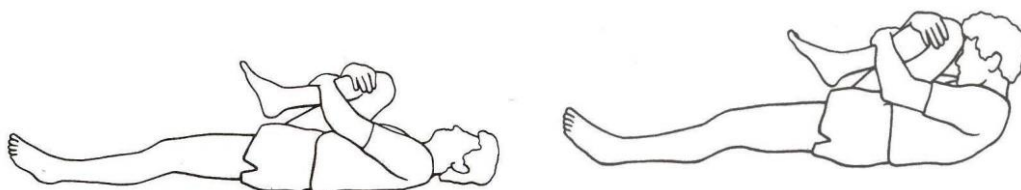


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Figure 6.

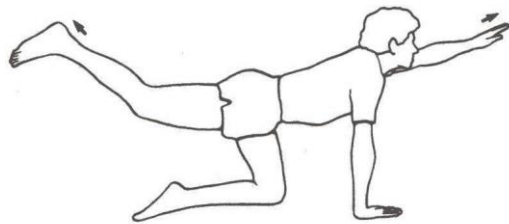


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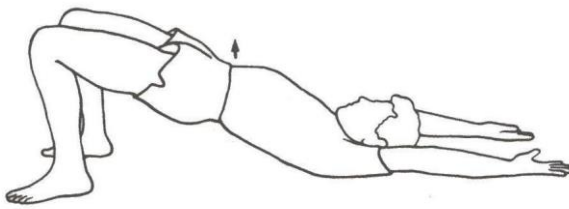


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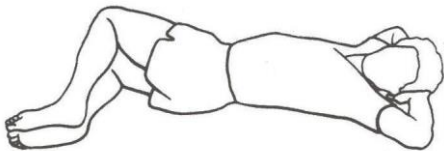


Figure 9.

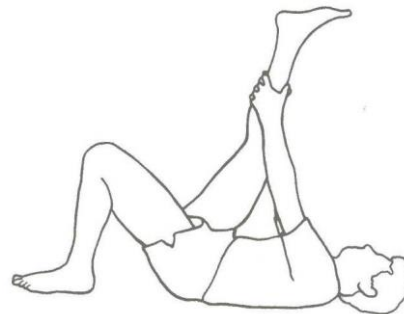
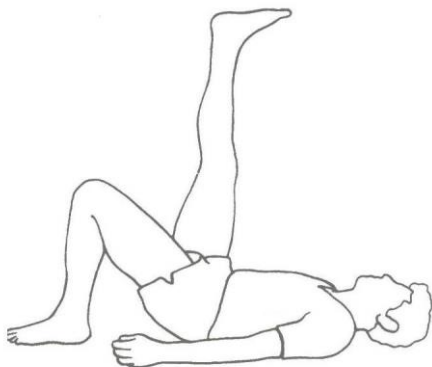


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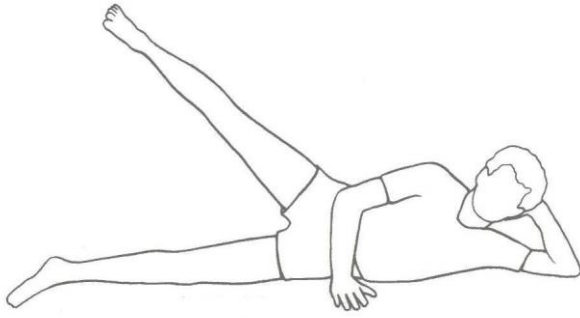


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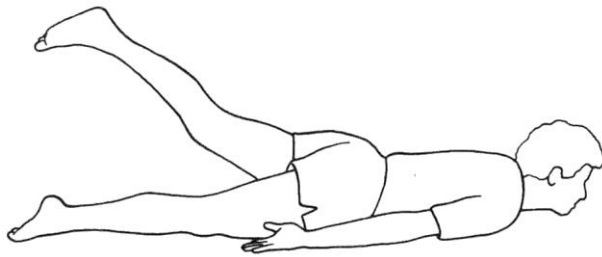


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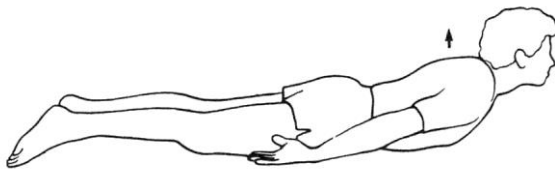


Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15

Unpleasant Experiences (Moments) Calendar

Name:.....

Be aware of an unpleasant experience at the time it is happening.

Use these questions to focus your awareness on the details of it as it is happening. Write it down later.

Day	What was the experience?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods and feelings accompanied the experience?	What thoughts went through your mind?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
	e.g. Waiting for the cable company to come out and fix our line. Realise that I am missing an important meeting at work.	Temples throbbing, tightness in my neck and shoulders, pacing back and forth.	Angry, helpless.	"Is this what they mean by service?" "They don't have to be responsible, they have monopoly." "This is one meeting I didn't want to miss."	I hope I don't have to go through that again soon.
Day 1					
Day 2					

Day 3					
Day 4					
Day 5					
Day 6					
Day 7					

Home practice following session 3

Audio: 'Mindful Yoga' and 'Stretch and Breath'

This week we are going to use three different formal practices:
If you have any back or other health difficulties that may cause problems, please make your own decision as to which (if any) of these exercises to do.

- Practice the **Stretch and Breath meditation** on days 1, 3 and 5 and the **Mindful Movement (Yoga)** on days 2, 4 and 6.
- **Three-Minute Breathing Space:** Practice this 3 times a day, at set times, that you have decided in advance.
- Complete the **Unpleasant Experience Calendar** (one entry per day). Use this as an opportunity to become aware of the *thoughts, feelings and body sensations* of the unpleasant experience, at the time it is happening.

Complete the 'Practice Record Form' each time you do any of the practices. Make a note of anything that you notice.

Practice Record Form

Name:.....

Record on this form each time you practice. Also, make a note of anything that comes up in the practice, so that we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Day / date	Practice (Yes / No)	Comments
Date:	Stretch and Breath: BS: 1 2 3	
Date:	Mindful Movement: BS: 1 2 3	
Date:	Stretch and Breath: BS: 1 2 3	
Date:	Mindful Movement: BS: 1 2 3	
Date:	Stretch and Breath: BS: 1 2 3	
Date:	Mindful Movement: BS: 1 2 3	