



## BODY SCAN

### CASEL Competency

Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills

### SEL\*f Component

Relaxation

### Purpose

Relaxes the body, calms the body, increases sensory awareness.

### Materials

Ball of yarn.

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## DESCRIPTION

1. Find a comfortable position (seated, standing, or lying down on your back).
2. Keep a soft gaze or close your eyes.
3. Take a deep breath in and a smooth breath out. Continue to connect to your breath.
4. We are going to do a body scan by moving our attention to different parts of our body and inviting them to relax.
5. Start by paying attention to your feet. What do your feet feel like right now? Let your feet be heavy and relaxed. On the inhale, focus on your feet, and on the exhale, imagine they could sink a half-inch into the ground. Now, bring your attention to your legs. What do your legs feel like right now? Let your legs rest heavy on the inhale, and as you breathe out feel them sink into the ground. Now, bring your attention to your hips. How do your hips feel right now?

Release tension and stress around your hips by sinking them heavy into the ground as you exhale. Now, bring your attention to your belly. Breathe in, breathe out. How does your belly feel right now? Let your belly feel heavy and relaxed. Now, pay attention to your shoulders. Now, bring your attention to the back of your head, this powerful place full of our thoughts. Give it a rest by gently rocking it side to side, and letting it sink a little bit deeper into the ground. Release your jaw, relax the muscles in your face, and let go of any tension you are holding around your eyes. Let your whole body feel completely heavy and relaxed. (Allow anywhere from 3-8 minutes of total relaxation.)

6. To come out, begin to deepen your breath. Gently wiggle your fingers and your toes, and reach your arms above your head for a full body stretch.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did it feel to focus your attention on the various parts of your body?

What was it like to let go of tension or stress and to feel supported by the ground beneath you?

How do you feel after this relaxation?

When might it be beneficial to practice this kind of relaxation technique in your life?

## SENTENCE FRAMES

It feels \_\_\_\_\_ to focus my attention on \_\_\_\_\_ parts of my body.

It felt \_\_\_\_\_ to let go of tension or stress and feel the ground beneath me.  
I felt \_\_\_\_\_ after this relaxation.

Practicing the body scan would be helpful when \_\_\_\_\_.

## PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

### PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Tell young children what you are going to do and why before guiding them into the practice (“we will observe what’s happening in our body from head to toe to help us relax our bodies and focus our minds.”) Begin with a short amount of time (e.g., 1 minute) and guide them to focus on a few points of their body. Add on more time with practice.

### SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

This can be a great way to settle students in before a test or release tension after a stressful situation. This practice takes students out of their mind and into their bodies, which can cultivate a deeper sense of presence and relaxation.

### TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

Body scans can trigger those students that may have experienced trauma. The body scan can be modified to focus on the periphery away from the body, where the interface of the body meets the world. Students may also practice the body scan with eyes open.

### BOOKS

The following books are great resources:

- Ready...Set...R.E.L.A.X: A Research Based Program of Relaxation, Learning and Self Esteem for Children by Jeffrey S. Allen, M.ED., Roger J. Klein, Psy.D.
- Spinning Inward: Using Guided Imagery with Children for Learning, Creativity and Relaxation by Maureen Murdock.

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This lesson plan is taken from the Social-Emotional Learning and Facilitation (SEL\*F) Manual distributed in Breathe For Change’s 200-hour Wellness, SEL and Yoga Teacher Training for Educators. We ask that you do not use these materials as part of any paid-for training or consultation. If you wish to use any of these materials for a presentation outside of your school community or organization, please credit Breathe For Change and contact us in advance.