

Developing Kindness Towards the Body

Stop what you're doing and become aware of the sensations of the body. Sensation is the main way that the body communicates with the mind. By becoming more aware of body sensation you can increase awareness of the state of your body. To listen to the body, close your eyes, gently look downwards towards it and place your awareness in a part of interest.

The fingers are an easy example. Imagine you can feel the sensation from the skin and tips of the fingers. Then underneath that, from the fleshy muscle and tendons of the fingers. Then the surface of the bones of the fingers, and the joints. And, finally, from within the bone itself. As your awareness builds, it becomes easier to take stock of deeper and more specific areas of the body.

Some people only listen to their bodies when they are screaming in pain. By practising awareness of the body, you will be able to pick up much earlier signals and act on them to



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protect your health. Sensations may be covered by words like tension, unease, ease, lightness, heaviness, dullness, stagnant, bright, hard, relaxed, tingly, numb, free, hot, cold, achy, neutral and others. And, the more you listen to your body the more it will talk to you.

As we eat different foods, use prescription drugs, undertake different

activities and experience changing emotional states, we can check in with the body to see its response. The sensation is a guide for what your body is finding helpful and what it is not. The TV advertisement may say "Experts Declare Brand X Milk is Good For You!" Well with this skill you can drink down a glass and decide for yourself within minutes. You can assert more conscious control of your body as well as use your new awareness to make better health and lifestyle choices.

The process works the other way as well, allowing you to talk to your body. You can bring a sense of kindness, gratitude and appreciation into the mind, perhaps using a fond memory or personal prayer.

By bringing your mindfulness to a body part which may be uncomfortable or in pain, you can diffuse the positive feelings you have built up into the affected area and listen for the response.

This content reflects personal opinions of Tat Loo, a Dunedin-based Doctor of Chiropractic.

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