



**HKU  
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香港大學矯形及創傷外科學系

# **MINDFULNESS-BASED POST-OPERATIVE CHRONIC SHOULDER PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE 2: BODY SCAN MEDITATION**



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This is a guided body scan meditation. *It incorporates mindful breathing and sitting meditation to deepen your inner senses. You will learn to see your thoughts and feelings from a new perspective, relate to them just as we relate to sounds and sights, and discover that thoughts, internal self-talks and emotions often come and go like clouds in the sky.*

To prepare yourself, settle in a personal place that is cozy and warm; safe and secure that is not interrupted by anyone and your daily chores.

Now lie down on your back. If you feel any tensions at your joints such as shoulders, neck, knees, ankles, etc., you can use soft padding such as a blanket or pillows for support if that's necessary.

When you lie down, set your arms down by your sides, palms facing up, or you can place your palms on your abdomen loosely so that you can feel the subtle movements of your breath when it comes and go naturally. Let your hips be relaxed, feet loosely fall to the sides. Begin to feel the contact between your skin and the surface underneath you.

As you are lying here, begin to experience your body through breaths. You are being sensitive but not over-reacting. You start to cultivate moment-to-moment awareness of what exactly you are feeling in your body non-judgmentally, with openness and gentleness. Your attention is on your breathing, the sensations of the cyclical nature of inhalation and exhalation. Perhaps notice the subtle gaps between the in-breath and the out-breath. Expand your attention not only to your abdomen but the body as A WHOLE in all dimensions, as though the whole body is breathing from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet, out to the surface of your skin and into the internal organs

You are simply lying here to rest, observe and acknowledge, to let it be in the stillness of being here and now. This is what we're doing, resting and becoming aware of whatever comes up. Come and aware of the space within your body and around it, and also the gap between these two spaces, the skin. Feel the skin is breathing, and your whole body is breathing into and out of this space that you are in. You may start to have discomfort or pain in the muscles, joints or somewhere. And if that happens, then we can adjust our posture ever so slightly but within the zone of meditation. You are aware of the movement, the intention to move and the outcomes of the movements.





To strengthen our ability of bringing mindfulness to help our body recover, I would like you to purposely sit with these intense sensations as they arise and stay. Hold on to that sensations for a moment. They may change, stay, disappear and come back to you at some point. Whatever happens, simply be here and continue breathing into the body and out of the body with moment-to-moment awareness. You are alert, attentive but not rejecting and avoiding.

We will start from the **LEFT** side of the body. Slowly direct your focus, down from the belly region, down the lower body, through the left leg and all the way down to the left foot and out to the toes of the left foot.

Now expand your awareness to the sides, sole and top of the foot, the instep and the heel, up to the ankle, shin, calf and knee; even the inside of the leg such as the ligaments, tendons, bones and muscles. Be in touch with the skin layering across the thin muscular tissues and bones of the ankle.

Imagine a cobweb of blood vessels, fine tissues and fascia that interweave the interiors of the lower left leg.

Now continue this process from the knee up towards the left thigh.

Letting the breath help you explore right into the kneecap, back and sides of the left knee, its muscles and cartilage and joint.

Expand your awareness of the facets of your left thigh, on the outside from the left knee to the left outer hip bone, on the inside from the left knee to the groin. Penetrate deeper from the surface of the skin to the inside structure of our knee and thigh. You may begin to notice its strength and complexity of it. When you exhale deeply, let your left knee and thigh completely soften and relax.

So you are allowing the trail of attention to move along the entire left side of your body.

Take a moment to stay at this vision: You could breathe in from the nostrils down to the toes; and then you breath out from the toes, up the leg, up through the trunk, through the chest and eventually out of your nostrils again.





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It is possible that you feel nothing in which case you just have to simply stay blank there. Whatever you are feeling right now, it is all ok. Just Simply feel and acknowledge what is already here.

So now take a deep breath. As you breathe out, let your senses shift to the **RIGHT** leg and out to the toes of the right foot, the big toe, the little toe, the toes in between. And then breathe into the top, the sides and the sole of the foot, the instep and the heel; up to the ankle, stay in whatever sensations arising from every single breath.

Slowly move your focus and awareness to the right side of the lower body between the ankle and the knee. Can you feel the inside and outside of the shin bone, the calf muscle and the knee? You might feel tingling, twitching, tightness or none at all. Be fully in touch with this region of the body, breathing down into it and breathing out from it. Receive those sensations and allow them to be just as they are.

Now take another deeper breath, breathing into the calf muscle, shin bone up towards your knee; and on the out-breath, let go a little more and follow your out-breath to the right knee, through the kneecap into the joint and out to the surface of the knee, the front, back and sides.

Another deep breath in, you will shift your focus of your awareness to the right thigh, the big strong muscles and the long heavy bones that attach your right knee and hip.

You will try to let go of any tension that may exist. Take a deeper breath, breathing into your right thigh again, and then on the out-breath, bring your attention to the hips, the buttocks at the back, the genital area in the front, the sitting bones, and the entire pelvic girdle. Breathe down into this region and remain open and relax to whatever sensations there may be.

Remain present and still now.

Adjust your postures and breaths and then direct your intention to the upper body from the hips up to the spinal column and neck regions.

Our back and shoulders are often where most of the tensions are rooted and accumulated on a daily basis. I would like you to bring your awareness and breaths down into the lower back.





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How do you feel right now? Remember that we are not trying to change our natural sensations but to observe and simply tune in.

Take a deeper breath in then a deeper breath out, let yourself go. Then move your breaths from the lower spine, around to the front of the spine and to the entire rib cage. Allowing deep breaths to fill your ribcage, to expand to the sides, up to the solar plexus and to the chest.

Breathe in now to the upper back, to your shoulder girdles and across both shoulder blades. What are the sensations you are receiving here in this moment?

As tension, tightness and discomfort are commonly stored in these parts of our body, we are now going to explore a little bit deeper with curiosity and alertness, to check in what is right there.

Are the sensations remaining the same or changing with intensity, duration and location? Try to lean into them a little more with acceptance and calmness. It may take some time to happen, so be patient and take deep breaths from moment to moment.

Now take a deep breath into your arms, elbows, hands and wrists, and to your fingers right down to the fingertips, try to free yourself from expectations about what you wish to feel.

Tune in at your very best to the feelings you have in this moment. Is there any tingling, buzzing, pulsing, spasm at the tips of your fingers and thumbs? Or none at all? Just stay with any feelings you have right now.

Let the awareness expand from all your fingers, the palms, along the arms, then to your upper and lower back and to the front and sides of the spine, and out to both shoulders.

As you breathe in, imagine the breath could radiate from the hands, wrists, forearms, elbows, upper arms, and to the shoulders. Then a deep breath out, let it all go

Now move your awareness to your neck and breath into the sides, front and back of the neck. What feelings can you receive on all facets of the neck and also perhaps around the jaws and inside the throat? Tune in to whatever you can find here. Allow them to stay or wander off,





to appear and disappear. Once again remind ourselves that we are not going away with any sensations. we simply acknowledge their presence. It is ok to say to yourself, "*I feel unease, I am bored, or I cannot bear the pain, etc.*". "*This is normal and natural.*"

See if it is possible to let go of our usual habits to want things to be a certain way; to feel in a certain way; to judge how well we are doing in order to match our expectations and ideals. See if it is possible to let go of all of that, especially when we are emotionally unstable or suffering from pain. Continue to follow my voice all the way through as best as you can.

For most of us, it is almost our second nature that we take our body for granted until something goes wrong such as physical trauma, injuries or merely discomfort.

So now we are learning to take charge of our senses to be with our body with full attention, to notice what sensations that are coming and going without prior conditionings and judgements. Simply reckon that there's no definite way as to how we should feel. Whatever we're feeling is just what we're feeling right at this moment.

Now take a deep breath in and as you breath out, let go of the neck and direct your attention onto the face and the head.

We'll start with the lower jaw, from the jawline all the way to the bottom tip of your chin.

Then pay attention to the sensations inside the mouth cavity, the teeth, the gums, the tongue, the palate and the back of the throat where the air passes to the lungs through the trachea (windpipe).

Perhaps also feel the areas around the mouth: the lips and then to the nostrils.

Slowly shift the focus of your awareness to the cheeks, the temples and the ears. Then to the eyes, around the eyes, the eyelids, the eyeballs, the space between the eyebrows and up to the forehead. Notice the subtle connection among all sensual organs. By turning your senses inward, check to see if you can switch on all your senses including sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.





Imagine that you can breathe into the whole cranium through the skin and scalp. Now take a deep long breath in, from the base of the spine, up into your lungs, then continue all the way up to the crown of your head. Then you breathe out from the head, the lungs and you empty your breath completely when it reaches down to the base of the spine again.

Imagine also that you could breathe in through the vertical spinal column and that the breath could radiate to the limbs and internal organs, eventually out through the bottom of your feet.

And when you take the next breath, you could direct the breath from the bottom of your feet, up to the trunk and limbs in all dimensions and ultimately out of the top of your head.

Stay at this vision for a moment and observe what it does to your senses.

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Slowly return to all of your senses once again, and resume to your original position when you first started this practice, either lying down or sitting up with good support.

Simply being here now.

Tender and relax

As bright as sunbeams

As soft as clouds

Not trying to find a particular feeling.

Allowing yourself to be exactly as you are.

Allowing your body to be exactly as you find it right at this moment in time.

***Invite a sense of letting go, a sense of quietness within the body, a sense of surrender to the space you are now***

