

Activity



Materials:

- Bell or chime

This activity encourages students to notice their body sensations and breath as they move through a sequence of seven different stretches to relax parts of their body.

Mindful movement

1. Read the script below OR you can pre-record yourself. In guiding the students through the sequence, use a calm, relaxed tone of voice.
2. Begin by asking students to stand next to their desks.
3. Turn off the light in your classroom.
4. Ask students whether they feel tension in their bodies? If so, where?
5. Ask students to close their eyes as you go through the movements.

6. Explain about mindful movement:

"Mindful movement is similar to yoga or Tai Chi. It's a practice of moving your body slowly, and with great care and attention to what's happening in the present moment. You are also not competing with anyone near you. What you do with your body doesn't matter as much as simply noticing your body, your movements, and your breath."

7. Invite them to listen carefully to your directions:

"As you go through each movement, pay attention to the messages that arise in your body. Any time you notice stress or tension, breathe deeply in and out through that part of your body—just noticing whether that allows your body to release any of the stress. If any particular movement causes pain, do not force yourself to do it. Instead, modify the movement so that it works for your body, or just practice mindful sitting or standing instead. Remember, what's most important is staying present with your body—not trying to get any certain kind of workout."

Note: You don't need to read verbatim from the script, but rather to learn the practice yourself. Use the script as an example of the steps as well as the spirit of the practice. But in leading the practice, you can guide students using your own words, from your own moment-to-moment experience.

Section 8. Nicotine and your mental health

ACTIVITY: Mindful movement

Stand like a mountain.

"We'll begin with standing like a mountain. Standing tall, feeling your feet firmly rooted on the ground, your head reaching towards the sky—stable, solid, grand.

We'll hear one sound of the bell, breathing in and out deeply and mindfully, allowing the breath to fill the entire body. Breathing in—I am breathing in. Breathing out—I am breathing out. In. Out."

[Ring the bell or chime, pause for 2 to 3 seconds]

Roll your shoulders.

With the next breath in, roll your shoulders forward and up. As you breathe out, bring your shoulders back and down.

Breathing in, roll your shoulders up. Breathing out, roll your shoulders down. Continuing at your own pace, noticing the sensations in your shoulders. Notice if there's any stress or tension, or if your shoulders feels light, loose, and relaxed.

Continuing to breathe mindfully, reversing directions, rolling your shoulders forward as you breathe. Rolling my shoulders—I am aware that I am rolling my shoulders. [Pause]

Then allowing your shoulders to relax. Come back to neutral.

Roll your neck.

Breathing in, breathing out. Roll your neck forward and down, looking toward the floor.

Breathing in, roll your head to the right, so your right ear is close to your right shoulder.

Breathing out, roll forward and down. Breathing in, roll to the left. Breathing out, continue to roll your neck. Breathing out, continue to roll your neck to each side. Gently notice any sensations in your neck. [Pause] Coming back to neutral, relax and check in with your body. Maybe shaking it out a bit to loosen up.

Stretch your arms.

With your next breath in, stretch your arms out to your sides, and slowly swing them up over your head, fingers pointing up.

Breathing out, bring your palms down in front of you, palms facing down, so your arms are by your side again.

Breathing in, arms coming around and up over your head in a big circle. Breathing out, gathering the breath through the middle of your body, hands coming down.

Continue to breathe, moving your hands and arms in circles, gathering your breath at your own pace. As best you can, stay with your breath, stay with your body. Notice when your mind wanders. Notice where your mind has wandered, and bringing it back to the breath and to the body. [Pause]

Now coming back to neutral. Relaxing your arms by your side.

Section 8. Nicotine and your mental health

ACTIVITY: Mindful movement

Hang like a rag doll.

Breathing in, breathing out, and bending forward at the waist, bending your knees slightly – allowing your arms to hang and your head to hang like a rag doll.

Give your arms a little shake. Shake your head no, nod your head yes.

As best you can, bend at the waist instead of rounding your back. Perhaps find a little bit of extra length in your spine.

Now just breathe, noticing the sensations in your body as you are bending forward. [Pause]

With the next breath in, come back slowly to standing, straighten at the waist, slowly and gently. Stand and notice how your body feels right now.

Twist.

Our last movement will be a twist.

We'll first twist to the left. Put your right hand on your left hip. Slide your left hand behind your back, and look over your left shoulder. Hold there. Breathe in, finding a little bit more length in your spine. Breathe out and notice the sensations in your body as you twist deeper. Let's stay here and breathe in and out three times.

With your next breath in, come back to neutral. With the next breath out, switch directions and twist to the right. Put your left hand at your right hip and your right hand behind your back. Look over your right shoulder. Find length in the spine and breathe. Noticing what sensations are present in your hips, spine and shoulders. Breathe in. Twist deeper if you can. Breathe out. Hold. [Pause]

With the next breath in, come back to a neutral position and face forward.

And now check in with your entire body. How does your whole body feel now?

Take a moment to scan through your entire body from head to toe, noticing if there are any areas of tension and stress. Noticing if your body feels any different, or if it feels the same.

Breathing in—I am aware of my body. Breathing out. [Pause]

Take a moment to appreciate yourself. [Pause]

We'll end this meditation with one sound of the bell. [Ring bell or chime]

Ask students:

- What is it like to notice your body and how it feels?
- What did you notice while you were relaxing your body?