

## Body Scan Points – Intention and Skillful Means

### Intention

- Fostering embodiment, intimacy with the body, recognition of the integrity present no matter what is going on currently
- Development of flexibility of attention
- Present moment awareness of sensation in the here and now along with recognition of thoughts and emotions that might be evoked
- Direct experience/awareness of sensation
- Not relaxation
- Fostering sense of wholeness
- Cultivating curiosity, kindness, acknowledgment, acceptance
- Befriending the *actuality* of the body
- Awareness of impermanence
- Encouraging wakefulness

### Skillful Means

- Positions (lying down, astronaut, sitting, other)
- Systematic progression through the body (as per curriculum)
- Giving options, choices-especially with working with pain
- Pacing; tone; is it audible?
- Acknowledging sleepiness
- Encouraging wakefulness
- Language appropriate to setting and population
- Naming the reality of the body as it is-- parts added or missing, scars, as well as recognition of emotions and thoughts that arise in response to the scan
- Inviting to “soften,” but not demanding; allowing things to be as they are

### **Leading Guidance:**

- Lead from your own experience – practice from the inside
- Make language accessible (not necessary to include medical/anatomical terms) and inclusive.
- Use “perhaps,” “if,” “maybe,” to suggest possible experiences and open the door to sensation language.
- Are words such as “let go” or “relax” creating an expectation or focus on making something happen or getting to some state that isn’t an investigation of what’s actually here now?
- Naming “maybe no sensation at all.”
- Setting up and ending the body scan: Offering clear, inviting instructions and support.
- Pacing: Steady, but with enough space to explore the directions
- Tone: A normal, warm and friendly tone is optimal and cultivates wakefulness. Avoid a “meditation” voice, or an overly slow or hypnotic tone.

- If possible, depending on the language you're speaking in—using present tense, and “-ing” words (present participle) to foster engagement in the moment.
- Avoid “I’d like you to...” since we’re not asking participants to do this for *us*.
- Watch the use of pronouns: When speaking about the body, it’s fine to sometimes use “your” and sometimes “the” when referring to a body part. “The” highlights impermanence and the possibility of not taking things so personally, but if overused, it can also sound disembodied.

## **AOB Points – Intention and Skillful Means**

### **Intention**

- Fostering awareness of sensation with focus on the breath

Fostering awareness of the body

- Awareness of impermanence
- Cultivation of curiosity
- Cultivation of collected mind

### **Skillful Means**

- Posture
- Natural breath—no manipulation
- Aiming, sustaining and redirecting attention with breath as objective of awareness
- Normalizing wandering mind, offering guidance to redirect mind with discipline and kindness
- Each moment is a new beginning

### **Leading guidance:**

- Keep to basic instructions in class, emphasizing simplicity, clarity around posture, and sitting meditation language.
- Allow instructions to flow in a way that makes sense
- Give enough space for people to explore the breath on their own, but enough guidance so people don't get lost. This will change as familiarity with the practice grows

## Yoga Points – Intention and Skillful Means

### Intention

- Safety and staying within one's limits
- Bringing awareness to movement
- Being with the body as it is, acceptance
- Focus on process and experience, not final pose
- Exploration of limits and possibilities in the present moment
- Cultivating kindness toward the body
- Awareness of thoughts, emotions, and judgements

### Skillful Means

- Give precautions first—before lying down or standing.
- Yoga (not chi gong or other contemplative movement)
- Options (chair, in your mind, modifications)
- Meaning of yoga; choice of “mindful movement”
- Slow pace
- Clear, precise language (as if for a blind person)
- Teacher practices along
- No Sanskrit
- Guidance around exploring but not overstepping limits, including how long to hold poses

### **Leading guidance:**

- Offer guidelines to stay well within the range of movement, possibly starting with just 60% of what's do-able.
- If a pose isn't possible, be aware of thoughts and emotions that arise. Modifications are welcome, as are doing the movement in one's mind, using the imagination.
- Teacher guides, participant is the expert on their own body and life.
- Invitational language (not commands, which create resistance)
- Inviting participants to engage NOW: Present-centered
- Chose pronouns carefully. What makes sense? Your, the, our—and how to make this natural. “The” points to non-self.
- Use of present participle (-ing) (which may not work in other languages); what's the intention?
- Value of language that explores poses and movement from the inside (vs striving for postural perfection).

- Not overly directing the breath. Some poses (cat/cow, for instance) are amenable and supported by breath guidance, but in general, allow people to find their own way with the breath. Encourage the breath to be free, flowing and deep, but without manipulation. Awareness around tightening or holding the breath is helpful.

## **Walking Points – Intention and Skillful Means**

### **Intention**

- Concentration practice in movement
- Flexibility of attention (widen focus)
- Practice can be found in the ordinary movements of everyday life

### **Skillful Means**

- Clear instruction, guidance
- Pacing: instructions for walking are often Front-loaded, so people can be free to move further away from instructor

### **Leading Guidance:**

- Walking practice can be entered in many ways. In the beginning, keeping the focus narrow—both in terms of focus of attention (starting with soles of the feet, sensations of movement in the legs) as well as “gauge” (yoga mat, shorter distance) is helpful. As practice grows, guidance can expand to include breath, sensations in the whole body, and further—to include the environment.
- It’s helpful to offer mountain pose as a place to return to when you find the mind has wandered from the experience of walking.
- Recommend that when purposefully guiding slower walking, pace be slow enough to be in touch with sensations, but not so slow as to lose balance.

## **Full Sitting (Breath through Choiceless Awareness)– Intention and Skillful Means**

### **Intention**

- Moving through objects of awareness: AOB, body sensations, sound, thoughts and emotions (mind states), choiceless awareness, (concentration to open presence) return to breath to end

### **Skillful Means**

- Posture
- Clear guidance/language
- Inclusion of guidance around pain (body and emotional/psychological pain)
- Pacing, use of silence
- Opportunity to “begin again”
- As with AOB, use of present tense, recognition of mind wandering and instruction to escort attention back to whatever focus of awareness is being explored

### **Leading Guidance**

- Each object of awareness should be clearly introduced. Leave enough silence and space to explore the domain (balancing silence with guidance)
- Include some comments on the changing nature of all things throughout the exploration of the domains (impermanence)
- Balance the time for each object so there is a relatively similar amount of time for each, including choiceless awareness
- As the meditation develops, there can be more silence
- The meditation can end with the breath, bringing the wider span of choiceless awareness to a more grounded and body-oriented focus
- Be attentive to how the meditation ends and moves into interacting, shifting the body, etc. With mindfulness, we are aiming to be fully present, so instructions to “come back to the room,” are less skillful, since we haven’t gone anywhere.