



Teacher Resource:

# Mindfulness

at National Trust for Scotland



# Mindfulness

The practice of being aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment, thought to create a feeling of calm

**Visiting a National Trust for Scotland property offers your class learning, fun and excitement. We also recognise that being present in your surroundings, particularly within a historic property or natural environment can have a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing. It can support teachers in delivering the Health and Wellbeing Curriculum area.**

Feel free to adapt these activities to suit the needs of your pupils, your schedule or the time of year. Different people will find different activities useful for bringing a sense of calm and grounding. Each of the activities can be delivered at any point during your visit, the timings below are suggestions.

As you continue on your mindfulness journey, you may find better engagement with regular practice. You may also encounter more challenging responses. The links and resources on [our website](#) can support you with these. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to deliver or engage in mindfulness; it's all about noticing and being present in the moment.

This resource is designed to support Primary pupils but can be adapted for use by Early Years or Secondary.

To prepare for each activity

- \* Sit or stand comfortably in a group
- \* Close or relax your eyes
- \* Make your body really still, like a mountain
- \* Take a long deep breath in and out
- \* Notice how you're feeling



# On the Journey

## Impact:

- \* To notice how I'm feeling and be aware of those feelings
- \* To make my mind calm and find my focus

## Activity: Mindful Breathing

Before getting off the coach, ask pupils to do three short breathing exercises.

- 1.** *Interlock your fingers in front of you and place them, palms towards you, on your tummy. Take a big breath in and push your hands away from you. Slowly breathe out and bring your hands back to your tummy.*
- 2.** *Move your hands from your tummy to your chest, palms on your body. Take another deep breath in, pushing your arms out as far as you can reach. Pause for a second. Slowly breathe out, bringing your hands back to your chest.*
- 3.** *Now, rest your hands in your lap or by your side and close your eyes. Take three more big deep breaths, noticing them in your tummy, counting each one.*

Ask pupils to open their eyes and reflect on how they're feeling. They may feel a sense of calm or boredom; they may be anxious or feel particular urges.

Mindful breathing is an easy introduction to mindfulness and allows pupils to focus their attention on one particular thing. It can help to relax bodies and reduce any negative emotions.



# When You Arrive

## Impact:

- \* To notice how I'm feeling and be aware of those feelings
- \* To focus on where I am and my surroundings

## Activity: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

When you arrive at your destination, ask pupils to identify five things they can see, four things they can hear, three things they can touch, two things they can smell, one thing they can taste. The importance is being able to be in the present moment and count the different things they find.

This activity could be done in pairs, groups or quietly on their own. Before you start, you may want to set firm boundaries about movement – they can stand in a group, sit down on the ground, or take five steps from the group while using their senses.



- 1. Look around and find five things that you can see. This could be a castle made of stone, birds flying in the sky or a leaf falling from a tree. Take a breath in between finding each one.**
- 2. Listen for the sounds all around you and name four that you can hear. Maybe it's cars parking on the gravel, birds chirping in the trees or water running nearby. Take a deep breath between each sound you find.**
- 3. Within your surroundings find three things you can touch. Maybe the leaves on the ground feel wet, or the gate feels cold, or your jumper feels soft and fluffy. Count each one and breathe in between.**
- 4. Close your eyes and find what you can smell from where you are. Can you smell animals in a nearby farm or food from the café? Can you smell flowers in the garden? Find two smells, and after each, take a breath.**
- 5. Lastly, think about what you can taste? It might be something you last ate. Or maybe even the mint from your toothpaste, or the rain you can catch on your tongue? Once you've named the taste, take a deep breath.**

Ask pupils to name some of the things they saw, heard or tasted. Then ask them to reflect on how they feel after spending time focusing on what they can sense around them. They may feel calmer and more relaxed.

Noticing their surrounding through this grounding technique can be really helpful to reduce anxiety and regulate pupil's emotions if they are feeling overwhelmed.

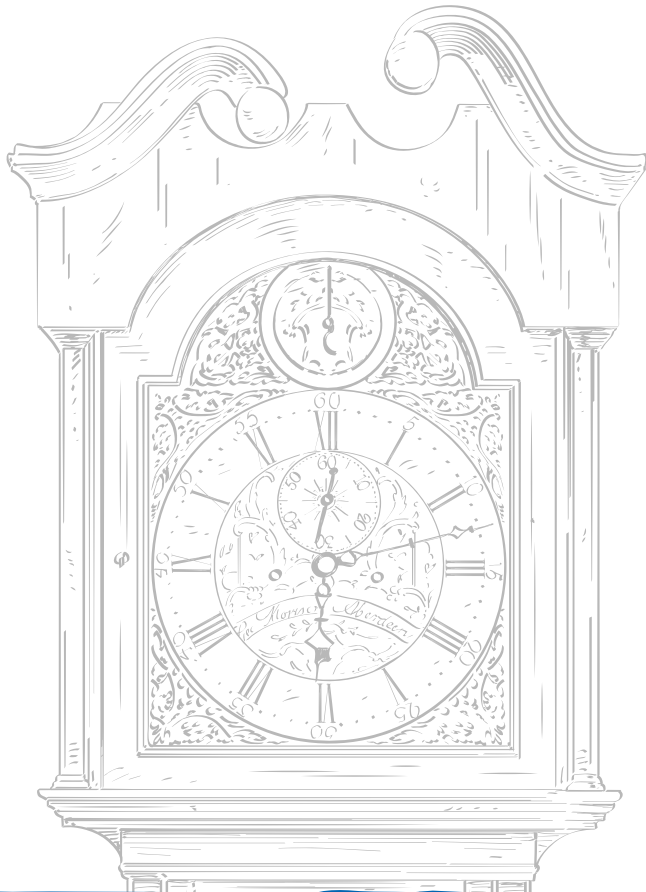
# In the Property

## Impact:

- \* To make my mind calm and find my focus
- \* To engage with things I find interesting

## Activity: Mindful Looking

Ask pupils to sit down on the floor and look around to find an object they find interesting – this might be a painting, a piece of furniture, or even a part of the room like a door. Give pupils 1-3 minutes to look at their chosen object.



1. *What do you see? What do you notice first? You can look at the shapes, colours, lines and movements.*
2. *Imagine who used or made the object. What would they have felt, seen, touched or smelled when they were here?*
3. *You might also start to notice how you feel when you look at the object – does the object make you feel happy, sad, bored, excited?*
4. *Remember to breathe deeply whilst looking and relax your body.*

Ask the pupils afterwards to reflect on how they feel. They may feel calmer and more relaxed or they may have felt sensations they haven't before.

Mindful looking creates time to engage their senses in a more focused manner and pay attention to what is around them – whether that's of interest to them or not. It can also help to alleviate stress and anxiety.

# In Nature

## Impact:

- \* To notice how I'm feeling and be aware of those feelings
- \* To connect with nature

## Activity: Mindful Listening

In a sheltered or safe area outdoors, find a space where the class can sit on the ground. Ask them to close their eyes for 1-3 minutes.

1. *At first, think about all the sounds you hear around you. Now, what can you identify? Are there new sounds the longer you listen? Can you identify which direction they're coming from?*
2. *Try to focus on the sounds and not get distracted by any other thoughts you might have.*

After the time is up, ask the group to open their eyes and name some of the sounds.

*Are you able to locate where the sounds are coming from?  
How do you feel? Do you feel calm, happy, peaceful?*

You could finish by reading the class a short poem, inspired by nature. You can find some of our favourites to use [here](#).

Mindful listening allows them to notice their surroundings and to understand their experiences and emotions. In a natural setting, it allows them to focus on the nature around them and connect with this for an improved sense of mental wellbeing.



# Before the End of the Day

## Impact:

- \* To notice how I'm feeling and be aware of those feelings
- \* To understand that my feelings and my body are connected

## Activity: Body Scanner

Before you take your class back to school, it's time to check in with how they're feeling and to notice this in their body. Ask them to take a comfortable seat or lie down if space/weather permits. To be more inclusive of all bodies, you may want to adapt this to suit your class by scanning a section of their bodies, for example, a very careful scan of just their hand.

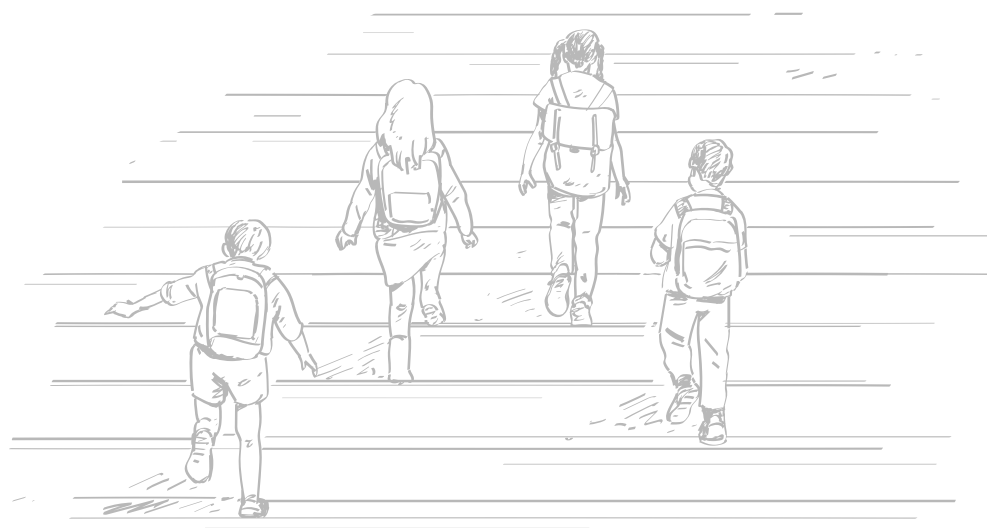
- 1. *Imagine your body is being scanned, like an X-ray. It's starting at the bottom, with your toes, and moving all the way up to the top, at your head.***
- 2. *Put all your focus onto your toes where the scanner begins, can you feel them? Are they cold or warm? Are they scrunched up or relaxed?***
- 3. *Slowly move the pupils up their bodies, pausing at each stage, and asking questions about feelings: Carry on up to your legs, knees. Then move up to your tummy, your chest, your hands and arms. Your shoulders, neck and your face – chin, lips, nose, eyes.***
- 4. *What did you feel? Did you feel any new or different sensations? Does anything hurt? What emotions did you notice? How does being here make them feel?***

Ask pupils to reflect on what they experienced after they have worked their way up to their head. They might want to do this quietly themselves or share with the group.

### ***How do you feel now? Has this visit changed how you feel?***

You could repeat this exercise at the end of the school day to see if their feelings have changed.

This exercise grounds pupils and gives them a chance to notice how they might be feeling and the impact this has on their bodies. It can also help relax muscles and reduce tension in their bodies.



# Your Own Wellbeing

**Remember, it's important that, as teachers, you also make time for yourselves.**

You can use any of these mindfulness activities and techniques to support your wellbeing and to practice self-care. You can adapt these to suit your needs and the ways in which you feel most comfortable.

By introducing these exercises into your routine, you can start to build a whole school approach to mindfulness. This can have a profound impact on pupils and adults alike; it can foster a shared understanding of how to cope in different situations; an increased vocabulary, to support each other talking about their feelings and shared tools to navigate through difficult times.

We'd love to hear how you've used this resource. Get in touch with us [learning@nts.org.uk](mailto:learning@nts.org.uk)

For more resources and activities on mindfulness, visit our resources page [online here](#).

