OVERNIGHT GUIDE TO CONQUERING CHRONIC PAIN WITH MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

ELIMINATING CHRONIC PAIN THROUGH MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

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INTRODUCTION

Pain and emotion are linked. It sounds improbable, but it's true. Emotions can affect how much inflammation and nerve irritation occur after an injury, thereby affecting your pain levels. Even when an injury is healed, it is possible for a constantly stressed mind to contribute to any feelings of pain that you might have. It appears as if you could be the reason that you're in constant pain, not the injury.

Although this seems unlikely, there is evidence that shows that the mind-body connection could be a lot greater than we previously thought. The good news is that, since this is the case, it is also possible to relieve your chronic pain. This can be achieved, not with drugs or surgery, but with simple mindfulness meditation.

Your entire body is constantly changing, as different chemical reactions take place in millions of different cells. All these reactions are responsible for your thoughts and actions. Even something that seems as simple as bending your arm is the result of several different reactions that are needed to bring about that movement, and it all starts with a thought.

Your thoughts are what starts these reactions, from moving your arm to walking to writing with a pen. It all starts with your head initiating the action and your body carrying it out. This is the mind-body connection.

It stands to reason, then, that changing certain thoughts and actions can bring about changes in your immune system, the same system that is responsible for fighting off infections, cancer and repairing damaged tissues. Training your mind to have direct influence over this system can indeed be done, and it can even influence your responses to medication.

Read on to discover how you can take control of your own body, and relieve yourself from chronic pain in order to lead a happier, healthier life, all through mindfulness meditation.
CHAPTER 1: THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

The mind-body connection is a complex and intriguing one. To fully understand how it works, you must first understand the chemistry behind everything.

Chemistry Of Thought
The human body is made up of a whole lot of different chemicals, such as hormones and enzymes. When a blood test is performed, the various chemicals in the blood give clues to how well the organs are functioning. The chemicals that influence our mood, emotions, thought processes and every other function in our body are called neurotransmitters, and these run throughout the nervous system.

Since these chemicals control all the functions in our bodies, an imbalance in them, be it in your mind or body, can result in a failure somewhere inside you. Whether it is a weak muscle, an abnormal heart rhythm, malfunctioning organs or even depression and panic attacks, all of it can be traced back to some sort of chemical imbalance.

What's interesting is that in the same way drugs work to restore balance to the chemicals, thought processes can accomplish the same thing. This means that even though most healthcare professionals will recommend drugs to restore balance, you can sometimes get the same results by just changing your thought processes. This will have fewer side effects, and will last longer than drugs, relieving pain in the long term.
How Stress Affects the Body

If you are under some kind of emotional distress, your stress hormones will be activated. This will result in what is more commonly known as the ‘fight-or-flight’ response. This isn't such a good thing for extended periods of time. It actually slows down your gastrointestinal tract and your immune system, while causing your heart to beat faster, due to the excess adrenaline flowing through your system, and also disrupting your sleep. These are not good things for your body, or your pain.

If this is repeated over and over, your body could enter a chronic state of stress, which can be a really bad thing. With every muscle and fiber of your body set to high alert for extended periods of time, your pain can be a lot worse. An injury during this period could lead to greater pain and disability, given the fact that your immune system and healing abilities are compromised.

Another thing that could lead to increased pain is how sensitive you are. Highly sensitive people, who tend to anticipate events, have been shown to have worse reactions to stress and even recover slower than normal.

However, it should be noted that being highly sensitive has been linked to genetics. A gene called COMT has been linked to the differing sensitivities to physical pain among patients, and certain gene coding has been shown to be an indicator of depression if combined with childhood stressors.

The Link Between Emotions and Pain

Medications don't always work if too many things are amiss with the mind-body connection. If negative emotions, such as hopelessness, anger and frustration, persist for a long period, your sickness can do the same. For example, anger has been shown to increase pain sensitivity and resistance to pain medications. Anger, depression, anxiety, lack of social support, and chronic stress, can also increase the likelihood of a heart attack.

There is a new field called epigenetics, which studies the factors that influence our genes. For example, various stressors, from physical to emotional, can lead to genes expressing themselves and triggering a certain reaction. This means that if you are genetically pre-disposed to something, this gene or set of genes may not be expressed without certain factors, and you won’t get whatever you are pre-disposed to.
CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness can do great things. It can increase your awareness of the mind-body connection, and change the way you see your experiences, be they positive or negative. It can also change the way you live with any chronic pain that you may be suffering from, and allow you to overcome it once and for all.

So what is mindfulness?

In essence, it is the awareness that comes about when we pay close attention to everything happening around us in the present moment. It doesn’t matter whether the experience is good or bad, it is about simply being aware of how it is unfolding from moment to moment. Learning how to do this can lead to amazing changes within yourself.

Getting it Back Before It’s Too Late

There is one group of people that often master the art of mindfulness, and sadly it is because they have very little time left. Many people who are dying savor every one of their remaining moments, because they can appreciate it a lot more. For example, a man dying of cancer might listen to the calls of birds outside his window with relish, or an older woman’s cancer diagnosis leads her to create a bucket list.

It is important that you get your mindfulness back before it is too late. Reading on can help you reclaim it, and allow you to live in the here and now. It will allow you to find joy in the smallest things, and appreciate the simpler things that life has to offer.

Even though you might be thinking that this is impossible. It is not. With what we are about to teach you, you will regain your mindfulness in no time.

Mindfulness During Hardship

We all face hardship every day, and they range from simple things that just annoy us, to more serious problems. Avoidance is the typical tactic employed by most to deal with these hardships. We constantly ignore the negative emotions, or even run from them. This isn’t the right way to deal with things.
Being mindful means paying attention to everything happening in the here and now, even the negative experiences. Letting yourself attend to these emotions and feelings can go a long way to reducing the amount of time it takes you to recover from them. Living in the moment can be incredibly reassuring, as the old saying 'this too shall pass' comes to mind.

Make it a point to note all your emotions occasionally each day, be they good or bad. Take note of what makes your pain worse, or better. Note all your findings down in a notebook, and read it at the end of the week. Ignore movement related pain changes, instead look at situations in your life, such as with family, friends, work or sleep.

How Judgments Affect Us
A judgment is when you label an experience as either good or bad. It can easily become second nature to us, and it takes the place of observing and describing our experiences in detail. If we observe and describe, our emotional reaction to the experience is different than if we were to judge it.

When you practice mindfulness, you might just be surprised at how judgmental you really are. You will also notice the tension that is created when your body reacts to you judge something in a negative way. Taking note of this connection between your mind and body will enable you to break free of this habit, and be liberated from this harmful practice.

The Beginner's Mind
Being more observant to what's happening around you, and having a neutral view of these events, is called having a 'beginner's mind'. With this, you will not prejudge people or situations as much as you used to, not let past events affect your current life and learn not to always anticipate negative experiences.

If you are suffering from chronic pain, there is a high chance that you will experience the challenges that life throws your way more intensely that most others. Therefore, your stress levels are likely to rise in anticipation of bad events, leading to the slowing down of your body's natural healing that was mentioned earlier. The worst part is that, in all likelihood, the pain returns after you've calmed down more intensely than before.

With a 'beginner's mind', you will find yourself less prone to anticipating negative events and thus, their impact will be lessened. Both your mind and body will become calmer, and your natural healing abilities will increase, while your pain levels decrease.
CHAPTER 3: WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation and mindfulness go hand-in-hand. Meditation refers to the action of setting aside a certain amount of time, once to a few times a day, to cultivate mindfulness by focusing on a particular aspect of the experience, and reigning your mind back into focus when it starts to wander.

The most important part of this experience is to focus on sensations within you, like thoughts, feeling, or aspects of your sensory experience. Ignore the jumble of thoughts in your mind by just focusing on one thing, such as breathing in and out. In fact, breathing is one of the most common things that people focus on, as almost everyone can do it without issue, unless they have a condition such as asthma.

You need to keep aware of your mind during the entire experience, and take note of when it wanders. When it inevitably does, slowly and calmly bring it back to focus, without getting frustrated or impatient. This process, of bringing your mind back, can be therapeutic, and enable you to be less judgmental of yourself.

The formal practice of meditation involves assuming a particular posture for a period of time and focusing on moment-to-moment awareness. It allows you to let go of all outside influences, and give yourself over to the simple domain of being.

There is also the informal practice of meditation, which means allowing every single aspect of the day to become part of the meditation process. This allows you to live in the present and not judge your moment-to-moment experiences.

However, it is important not to confuse meditation with relaxation. In fact, there are several basic differences between the two. For instance, the goal of relaxation therapy is to fall asleep, whereas with meditation, you are actually becoming ‘more awake’, in a sense. Where relaxation leads to the unfocused wandering of the mind, meditation is all about focus, which leads to a state of relaxation.

The Benefits of Meditation

There are several benefits to the act of meditation. For example, research has shown that there are positive effects to the immune system, similar to the ones experienced in the
deeper stages of sleep. With regular meditation, you can also recover from stressful events much quicker than before, and since the body and mind are linked, your immune system will not be adversely affected by the stress. Research has also shown that meditators often report that their pain medication works more effectively.

**Getting Started**

The most important aspect when getting started with meditation is timing. You'll need a time when you will not be interrupted, when your physical or emotional pain is not at its most intense, and when your mind is not clouded by medication.

The other factor to keep in mind is duration. You should start with about two to five minute sessions, and gradually increase that to twenty to thirty minutes. This will let you ease into the practice, and avoid getting bored too easily.

What you wear and how you position yourself is also important. You'll need loose, comfortable clothing, and to assume a comfortable position. Sitting upright in a chair is good if you can, or you can assume the classic lotus position, but otherwise a good practice is to have no points of pressure anywhere in your body that will restrict blood flow. Experiment and find what works best for you.

As you meditate, your mind might automatically focus on your pain, and thereby start increasing it. If this happens, take careful note of your emotions at the time. The pain increase is usually due to fear, which is self-defeating. Let go of that fear, and be aware of your pain. You are bigger than your physical pain, and thus have control over it. Observe it, and if you need to move, do it only after you are done observing it.

Sometimes, when you are too agitated or anxious, you will not be able to sit or lie down to perform your meditation. In these cases, you can try walking meditation. Walk slowly, either in a circle or by pacing, while keeping your eyes open and your attention on your breath or steps. This is especially useful if you experience flashbacks or painful memories during sitting meditation. It is a rare occurrence, but one to take note of.

**Useful Guidelines**

There are a few suggestions that will help as you practice meditation daily.

- **Do not strive:** This means that trying too hard leads to struggle, and sometimes we do not win our struggles. So be as fully aware of each moment as possible, putting yourself in the present. If your mind wanders, accept this fact and renew your attention to focus.
- **Don't set goals:** These can get in the way of accomplishing meditation practice. Setting goals for meditation is counter-productive. Allow everything to unfold naturally, and in its own time.

- **Never start while experiencing a crisis:** Although meditation can recharge the soul and keep you steady when a tragedy occurs, it is impossible to start while experiencing a personal crisis. Learn before or after a crisis occurs, and you will be able to deal with anything that comes your way.

- **Start with a CD:** Although advanced meditators often prefer to meditate in silence, you can opt to get a mediation CD. This can be useful for beginners. Some people will then gravitate towards silent meditation, while others will not. Whether or not you do is irrelevant, as long as you practice daily meditation.

- **Don't let your thoughts take control:** When you mind drifts, don't fight it. Instead, take note, explore the thought for a moment, then return to focus.

- **Duration of meditation:** There is no ideal amount of time for meditation. Whether you schedule a single session, or multiple sessions throughout the day, it is about finding what works best for you.

- **Make time for mediation:** You are never too busy to do so, and you will find that it will help you carry out your daily tasks more effectively, as well as help you overcome your pain.

Now that you know all of that, we suggest you spend a couple of weeks practicing it all. Make notes in your notebook each day to help the process along, and enjoy the process of learning. It is an adventure, and when you are more mindful and less judgmental, it will be like seeing the world through a different set of eyes.
CHAPTER 4: KEEPING IT GOING

Now that you've had time to put what you've learned into practice, do you not feel like a great weight has been lifted off your shoulders? Being judgmental is incredibly stressful, and shedding that frame of mind can lead to you being calmer and a lot less tense. This, in turn, improves your overall health and relieves pain.

Now, you're going to take things a step further and discover what makes your pain levels increase or decrease.

Pace Yourself

Some of the most common aggravators of pain happen to be activity, the amount of time you spend standing up or sitting down and walking. The best way to solve this is to observe without judging. For example, if you've been sitting for an extended period, instead of letting the thought that 'this is causing me pain' take root, simply take note of the fact and adjust your position every now and then. This is one of the first steps towards acceptance.

Acceptance is the best way to deal with chronic pain. In essence, it means understanding that the way things are now are not the way things will be forever. Once you get to this point, you are more likely to improve, becoming capable of things that you never thought you could do. Even though you need to feel the anger, frustration and denial that comes with an injury, you must not dwell on it. Accept it, and you can start on the road to recovery.

Stress Leads to Real Pain

It is important to note that pain, any pain, be it physical injury or psychological stress, is real pain. There is a physical change happening that is leading to the hurt, and it is real.
Migraines brought on by stress, for example, is a real pain caused by the blood vessels in the head narrowing and expanding, causing them to pulse and cause intense pain.

The pain you experience is not imaginary. It is another example of the mind-body connection, as your mind tells your body that the system is out of balance, so you start to experience pain. Whether it starts in the head or not, the pain is real, and mindfulness can help alleviate it, in much the same way it can help your body adapt to any challenges it may face in future.

Practicing Mindfulness in the Everyday
A great way to reduce your chronic pain is practice mindfulness in every activity. This puts you in the moment, and takes focus away from your pain. Here are a couple of examples of mundane activities that you can perform mindfully:

- **In the Shower**: A shower is one of the best places to practice this. It is a luxury to your senses, a veritable cavalcade of great experiences to focus on. The feeling of warm water on your skin, the fragrance of your soap, the feeling of the towel in your hand, etc. All of these are great things to be mindful of.

- **While Cleaning**: From simply dusting, to vacuuming, to cleaning out your fridge, all of these are great opportunities for mindfulness. Focus on the task, the here and now, and find pleasure in the simple things, such as the smell of dishwashing soap. What was once a chore soon becomes something that can relax and ease.

Mindfulness and Pain
As you become more and more mindful, your pain will decrease. Now, you might think that this is just because you are distracted from it. This isn't the case. Pain is actually an unpleasant sensation that your mind notices. So if your mind is focused on something else and the pain becomes secondary, it has indeed decreased. As you start being mindful of everything and become more engaged in the now, your chronic pain soon lessens.
CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES TO MEDITATION

At this point, you should have had the chance to try out formal meditation for some time. Chances are good that you have encountered some difficulties. In order to help you overcome them, the more common ones will be outlined for you.

A Restless Mind
This is one of the most common complaints for those who are just starting to meditate. You see, it is usually only once you start practicing that you realize how active your mind can actually be. All the thoughts and feelings that you never paid any heed before come to the forefront, and it can seem almost overwhelming. This isn't a bad thing, however.

Most of the time, this is actually an indication that your mind is on the way to becoming quieter, as you become conscious of how cluttered your mind can actually be. As you learn this, it allows you to use meditation to understand and reduce the clutter, putting you into an ideal state of relaxed alertness.

Remember not to become angry or impatient, but instead witness and understand the distractions, before returning your focus back to where it was.

Timing is of the Essence
Everyone is always complaining about how they have no time for things, and this can include meditation. By this point you should have gotten a consistent routine going, but perhaps you haven't because you couldn't find the time to do so. There are ways to solve this.

For instance, try getting your family members or friends to remind you to meditate. What helps a lot of people is to set up a schedule and stick to it. Set aside a certain time of day for meditation and make sure not to skip it. In the end, it will benefit you a lot more than if you skip it. You have to ask yourself whether it is worth being in constant, chronic pain, just because you can't spare up to half an hour a day.
Children and Pets
Young children and pets can often be an issue for anyone who is meditating. Pets less so, however, since a lot of the time people will find their pet will get into the habit of lying with them as they meditate.

Young children can still pose a challenge though. One of the best ways is to simply meditate before they wake up, or when they’re in school.

Falling Asleep
This is another common problem. If you encounter it, the answer could be as simple as changing the position you meditate in, or doing walking meditation. Meditating earlier in the day can also help.

Noisy Environments
These can be an issue when you’re just starting out. The solution is simply finding a quieter spot to meditate in. As you get more practice, however, you will find that noise will not disturb you as much as it once did, and it may even become part of your meditation experience.

Avoid Meditation When You Feel Intense Pain
Finding the ideal time to meditate also involves taking your pain levels into account. A high amount of pain can be detrimental to your meditation session. One of the best times is to do it a couple hours after you have taken your pain medication, since that is the time when it has taken effect and reduced your pain levels.

Emotional Stress
At certain times in your life, you will experience bouts of emotional stress, and as a result, will not feel motivated to meditate. When you are suffering like this, it can be very hard. What you should do is note your suffering, move on and return to you meditation later. It is important not to neglect it all-together, because suffering can teach us a lot about ourselves. Do your best to keep to your meditation schedule, as it can really help with the pain you are going through in trying times.
Flashbacks and Anxiety
There are some events that affect us for a long time after they have occurred. These events, such as trauma suffered in childhood, can affect the body's ability to heal itself. It is common for these bad memories to rise to the surface during meditation, and disrupt your session.

If this happens, you need to acknowledge them, allowing them to gradually come into focus over several sessions. Do not struggle with them, just make a note of them. If they become too painful to bear, discuss them with your doctor. They might need to be worked through, and it is important for you to do so. Burying them is not a good idea, as they can always come back if they aren't properly healed.

Commitment
Committing to your meditation can be difficult, but if you create your schedule and make it a point to stick to it, it can make things a lot easier. Record your sessions in your notebook, make a mental note not to skip sessions. After a time, you will start to look forward to, and enjoy, your sessions more and more.

Persistent Pain
If you experience the same pain over and over again for an extended period of time, you could end up being hypersensitive to it. This means that what might not have been painful before, such as a light touch, can suddenly become incredibly painful.

As your body responds to stressors frequently, it finds it harder and harder to heal. This interferes with everything, from movement to sleep and even your daily life. It can lead to a sense of being overwhelmed and perhaps even depression.

It can also lead to the anticipation of pain. The power of this is a strong one, as if you anticipate an event to be incredibly painful, it will be no matter what. This also applies to the treatment of pain. Believing a treatment can work can lead to it being successful.
CHAPTER 6: THE BODY SCAN

As you meditate, you will become more aware of what’s happening, both within and without. The simple practice of watching the world can give you insights that you never thought possible. You should find yourself becoming progressively less tense, and your pain easing, with each session.

You should be feeling safer, and more in control. Living in the moment will enable you to deal with any of the problems life can bring your way. Instead of getting upset and angry for no reason, you are now able to accept them. You are learning true acceptance.

But there is a chance that you still experience some of your chronic pain, even now. This next section is where we shall address that. Here is where you will learn 'The Body Scan', a technique that will help you apply the techniques you have learned to your own mind and body in a more intense way.

Preparing for the Body Scan

Meditation brings total mindfulness to your entire body, including the good and the bad. It is vital to note that during a body scan, there will be elements of physical and emotional pain. This means that it is best to do this when your pain is not at its worst, and remember to reserve about twenty minutes for it.

You can choose whichever meditation position is most comfortable for you, be it lying on the floor, or sitting in a chair with your feet propped up on a small stool, or even standing. You can then close your eyes and keep them softly shut for the duration of the session.

A body scan will take you through each part of your body, as your mind slowly becomes aware of the various different elements, their functions and whether or not they are functioning as they should. Since this is not a relaxation exercise, you will not be doing anything with these parts. You will simply become aware of them.
The Body Scan
Below are a set of instructions that you could get a friend to read for you, or you could record, over a period of twenty to thirty minutes. Their purpose is to guide you through the body scan.

Giving yourself over to your breath
Focusing on that to start off with
Breathing in
Breathing out
And when you’ve settled,
Becoming aware of your left foot
And the toes of your left foot, noting any sensation in your toes,
any pain or discomfort, observing, not judging.
And then the foot itself
The top of the foot, the sole of the foot which places itself on the floor
Giving you the support you need, working with your other foot to get you
to the places that you need to be.
Even if you have feet that don’t work the way you would like, that have been injured
in some way, honoring the Time they were working well, and being with them as they are
right now, in this moment.
And then becoming aware of the heel of your left foot, up to the ankle and the many small bones that are inside your ankle and allow it to perform so many movements that are important
To allow you to walk, to run, to swivel
Bringing awareness to any and all sensations in the ankle,
noticing any intensity or discomfort.
And then going further up the leg toward the shin
The area just under your knee
Aware of the stresses and strains on your knee that occur every day
The muscular tightening in muscles above and below it
And if this is an area for you that is painful,
Acknowledging that it is still an important part of your body,
which maintained its mobility for so many years
An amazing joint, carrying so much weight.
Appreciating the complexity of the movement
That the leg does every day, getting you where you need to be and
Working constantly, the lower leg in conjunction with the upper leg, and
Then through the hip, with the rest of the body.
Then becoming aware of the thigh and hip joint
Structures that support you.
And the buttocks, and genital regions
Acknowledging pain, soreness, or any sensations in these areas of the body.
Then around the circumference of the abdomen
From the front to the back and around again to the front
Aware of those structures that are inside the abdomen
Amazing organs inside the abdomen
The bowels, bladder, genital system, liver
Pancreas, kidneys: complex organs working together every day,
to enable us to function as human beings.
It’s not hard to acknowledge that if not feeling emotionally okay,
things can go wrong in some of these organs,
But if feeling okay, these organs work so much better.
Acknowledging the spine, the tailbone, lower back connecting with the upper back
Responsible for so many complex movements: swiveling, bending
For carrying sometimes heavy weights.
But prone to wear and tear, degenerations of time and prolonged use
Still honoring the spine for what it does.
And above the waist
The chest
Bringing awareness to what is inside the chest
The lungs
That are so important for every breath taken
Providing the focus for many of your meditations That life force that we call the breath.
Lungs filled with tiny, tiny tubules In which the air circulates
Through which air diffuses into that liquid we call blood, which allows every organ in the body to be nourished. Acknowledging that blood is carrying oxygen. Through the heart to be pumped to every organ in your body. Every organ needing oxygen. The heart: an amazingly complex organ. Not being afraid of it. In fact, marveling at it. Thankful. That long before there was so much technology, there was this amazing organ, which allowed us to develop into living beings. Full of this incredibly complex life. Then bringing awareness to your shoulder, and upper and lower arm, and hand. Dwelling within these structures for a while, then your neck. Aware that inside of it exist those important tubes for taking air to your lungs. And for taking food to your stomach. Each nourishing in different ways. One nourishing with oxygen. And the other nourishing with nutrients. Both important avenues for allowing the organs of your body to be nourished to sustain life. Then bringing awareness to your face, giving us our uniqueness allowing us to communicate with other human beings. Mouth, nose, cheeks, eyes, eyebrows, forehead, hair, ears. Incredible, timeless structures. There for us from the first time we were formed in the womb. Each part of the face taking part in our expressions. Then becoming aware of
The other side of the body: the right shoulder and arm. And just for this moment acknowledging your hand that allows you to pick things up
To move things
To gesture
Or make intricate movements.
Regarding your hands in your mind’s eye with curiosity marveling at their complexity.
And now becoming aware of your upper body down toward the waist.
Remembering again
To acknowledge the spine And then around inside the abdomen, acknowledging its organs and their capabilities.
Bringing your awareness to the right leg
Valuing the muscles: their strengths and weaknesses
They may be a source of pain or discomfort
Of aching, or inflammation, or throbbing
But still marveling at and appreciating them.
Down past the right knee
Into the right lower leg and ankle
With its many bones and tendons. And into the right foot
That part of us that, with our other foot, grounds us to the floor
Enabling us to live our lives
To connect us to people and to other places
And to find nourishment for our minds and bodies.
But every part of our bodies and minds also depends
On another very important organ: our brain
Which controls
Everything you have just scanned
Which makes us into human beings.
The brain providing that center
That tells every part of us
Where it should be in space
What to do
That sends out chemicals
Very suddenly sometimes
Giving us the feelings we have
Instructing parts of our bodies how to move
Sending messages to internal organs
On what chemicals they need to secrete
A power center of our body,
Needing nurturing and care,
Though when we are under stress
It is not hard to imagine
That some of those messages may go wrong
And that parts of the body
May not function the way we wish them to.
And now bringing awareness to the skin
The largest organ of the body
Which contributes to making us unique
Marveling at this structure
Which is waterproof
Such a complex structure which looks so simple
Which provides us with protection and encloses everything within us.
This body scan
Is really a nourishment for every part of us
Celebrating our uniqueness
And ability to nurture ourselves.
Breathing, acknowledging you have taken time just for yourself
The gift of time,
But that by taking this time to bring awareness to your body and mind,
You may do what you have to do
More competently and with an uncluttered mind
For the rest of your day.
Challenges
As you perform the scan, there are certain problems that you might encounter. Some of them are similar to the challenges you will face during meditation.

- **Intensifying Pain:** A common challenge when first doing a body scan is that it might become hard to focus on the parts of your body that give you pain. Focusing on them might give you the impression that your pain is intensifying, but this is just a stress reaction. Your mind anticipates pain, so it happens. You must acknowledge that focusing on the areas that give you pain can lead to difficult emotions, and after some time you will find that the pain has decreased.

- **A Restless Mind and Falling Asleep:** Your mind may start to wander during the exercise, or you may even fall asleep. If your mind wanders, just gently bring it back to the exercise, and as for falling asleep, you can simply change the position that you meditate in.

- **Flashbacks and Anxiety:** These may occur while you perform the scan. If they do, try doing the scan while slowly walking back and forth. You can also consult your therapist to deal with any painful memories.

- **Impatience and Dislike:** There is a chance you may feel this way during a scan. It might seem too slow, or you'll feel that you have too much to do. You have to remember that doing this will benefit you in the long term. In time and with daily practice, it is likely to become your favorite meditation.
CONCLUSION

As you practice meditation daily, and stick to your schedule, you will find your pain decreasing, day by day. Your body's immune system will improve as well, allowing you to fight off infections and diseases better. Emotional and physical stressors will become easier to deal with, and you'll move towards a life free of the chronic pain and stress you used to have.

It is important to keep in mind that these benefits will only occur if you follow the program. You must do this to reap the rewards. There will be times when you doubt you can, or when you feel you don't have time, or when other excuses rear their heads. You must ignore these. Ask yourself, is it better to set aside twenty to thirty minutes a day for meditation, nor not and live in constant pain?

By now you will have learned a lot about meditation and being mindful, all that is left to do is put it into practice. Only you can do that. Remember, you have the tools needed to relieve your pain, all you have to do is use them. In time, you will gain acceptance, and leading a truly mindful existence.