

How to Do a
**BEDTIME
BODY SCAN**
for a Peaceful Night's Sleep



By Lori Deschene, Tiny Buddha Founder

Have you ever lay down for the night and immediately felt physically and/or mentally restless? Maybe you even felt exhausted all day, but suddenly it's like there's a monsoon in your mind and a hurricane in your heart.

You try to relax your body and brain, but the more you try, the tenser you feel. And you know time's ticking and you have only so many hours to sleep, so the pressure's on, which makes it even harder to unwind.

I've been there many times before, myself. Lying in bed, twitching, fidgeting, overthinking, and jonesing for a sleeping pill—except I know I'll feel groggy in the morning and I'll probably be a lot moodier as a result. And I also know how consistent poor sleep can wreak havoc on my health.

We all need solid, restful sleep, ideally between seven and nine hours, to function at our best. Sleep not only enables our body and mind to recharge, it makes us physically healthier, mentally sharper, more emotionally balanced, and generally more pleasant to be around.

Consistent sleep also boosts our heart health, decreases our risk of depression, and reduces our stress.

As for sleep deprivation, it can lead to a number of serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke; it ages us physically and can cause us to gain weight; and it can impair both our judgment and our memory.

Since many of us struggle with sleep issues—and these anxiety-inducing stats are more likely to keep you up at night than help you drift off peacefully to dreamland—I wanted to share a practice that helps me naturally relax my mind and body for a good night's rest: a bedtime body scan meditation, coupled with progressive relaxation.

But first, here's how your Tiny Buddha mindfulness products can help elevate the experience.



How Your Tiny Buddha

MINDFULNESS PRODUCTS

Can Enhance This Practice

All of the products in this kit are aromatherapy-based and formulated with essential oils designed specifically to support mindfulness practices.



Aromatherapy is widely used among holistic health and wellness practitioners and has been proven to improve mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Adding aromatherapy to a mindfulness practice helps anchor your awareness to one of your most powerful senses, your sense of smell.

The essential oil roll-on and pillow spray, which nicely compliment any bedtime practice, are both infused with lavender essential oil, which is known to reduce stress and anxiety and promote calmness and wellness. And the bath and shower gel is lavender-infused as well, so a pre-bed bath or shower could be a perfect way to wind down before hopping into bed.

Since you might drift off to sleep during this practice, I recommend again using the lychee scented candle. This uplifting scent, which is known to promote clarity and focus, is better suited to daytime practices—perfect for a morning meditation!

And now, onto the practice...

What Is a

**BEDTIME
BODY SCAN**

Meditation?

A bedtime body scan gives you an opportunity to check in with your body to see where you may be holding on to stress and tension. Many of us live so caught up in our heads that we disconnect from our bodies, and yet our mental and emotional state can profoundly affect us physically.

Sure, you may recognize you have a headache if it's been pounding for hours. Or you might be aware that your legs hurt from pushing yourself at the gym (or sitting around watching Netflix—hey, it's all about balance!). But we tend to miss out on the more subtle stress-related sensations that cause physical discomfort—stiffness in your jaw from clenching, for example, or tightness in your shoulders from hunching all day.

A bedtime body scan allows you to check in with every part of your body, from head to toe, so you can bring non-judgmental awareness to your various aches and pains, and possibly breathe through them. You may not be able to ease all of your physical discomfort just by recognizing it, but you'll likely feel a lot more relaxed. And as a consequence of focusing on your body, you may also feel more grounded and mentally at ease.

How to Do a

**BEDTIME
BODY SCAN**

Before you get started, keep the following things in mind:

First, try as you may to focus on your body, thoughts and worries might pop into your head. This is normal, and it doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. You don't need to stop or change your thoughts. You just need to recognize them and then shift your focus back to your breath and your body, as many times as necessary.

Secondly, you might find yourself judging your physical sensations, or wanting to change them but then recognizing that you can't. Or, you might find yourself judging your body. Don't beat yourself up for struggling with yourself in this way, since this only causes more internal struggle. Whatever arises, try to meet it with compassion. The aches, the longing, the resistance, the frustration—visualize it all bouncing around inside a bubble labeled “humanness,” give it a great big hug, then let it go.

Now onto the body scan:

I like to combine a body scan with progressive relaxation, which entails purposely tensing muscles and then relaxing them—so you're both noticing what's going on in your body and then relaxing each part to the best of your ability.

Start by spritzing your **Tiny Buddha Relaxing Pillow Spray** on your pillow/bedding or in the air around you to enhance your practice with the calming scent of lavender. You may also want to apply your **Calming Essential Oil Roll On** to your neck or your temples to completely marinate yourself in this soothing smell.

Now, take a few slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, allowing your stomach to expand on the inhale and deflate with the exhale.



On your next outbreath, tune in to the top of your head. Feel the weight of it on your pillow, then simply notice the sensations there. Do you feel tingling? Pressure? Heat or coolness? Be open and curious about what you experience. Now, if it isn't physically uncomfortable to do so, tense the muscles around your skull, while breathing in, hold for a few seconds, then breathe out and release the tension.

Next, moving onto the face area: Feel the air as it comes in through your nostrils and out your mouth. Feel your hair brushing against your skin. Now notice the physical sensations in your forehead and around your eyes, nose, cheeks, and mouth. Do you feel any tightness or discomfort? Are your lips dry or chapped? Is your nose clear or stuffed? Tune into all the little muscles in your face—where do you feel tense, and where are you relaxed? Now deliberately scrunch up your face for a few seconds, while inhaling, hold for a few seconds, then exhale and let go.

Next, shift your focus to your neck, throat, and shoulders, areas where we often hold tension. Do you feel any tingling or tightness? Are you clenching your shoulders? Does your throat feel tender, sore, or swollen? Simply notice these sensations, without labeling them. If thoughts pop into your mind, notice them, then bring your focus back to your breath. Then, if it doesn't hurt to do so, deliberately tense your shoulders and neck for a few seconds, while inhaling, hold for a few seconds, and on the exhale, relax those muscles and let go.



Moving onto your arms: Bring your awareness to the sensations (or lack of sensations) in your upper arms and forearms. Do they feel heavy or light? Tense or relaxed? Twitchy or still? Once again, no judgment—just openness and curiosity. Notice how physical sensations change from one moment to the next, how no sensation is permanent, and they naturally transform if you allow it. On the next inhale, if it doesn't hurt to do so, clench your arms tight, hold for a few seconds, then exhale and let go.

Now, onto your hands: Feel them resting by your side or on your stomach and tune into your physical sensations: Light? Heavy? Jittery? Relaxed? Warm? Cold? (Mine chronically feel like they're encased in ice!) What about your fingers? And fingertips? Tune into every sensation, then, as before, if it doesn't hurt to do so, clench your hands into fists while inhaling, hold for a few seconds, then exhale and let that tension go.

Next, bring your attention back to your shoulders and shift your awareness down your back. First, tune into the upper back, zig zagging across from shoulder to shoulder. Many of us hold tension in our backs, so you may feel particularly tight or sore here. You may feel warm and sweaty where your body rests on the bed, or perhaps you feel cool and comfortable. No judgment, just notice the sensations, or lack thereof. Then repeat this for your lower back, after each scan tensing on an inhale and releasing on an exhale, if it doesn't cause discomfort, as you've done before.

Shifting your attention back to the front of your body, draw your awareness to your chest area. Feel and hear the rhythm of your heartbeat and feel your chest rising and falling as you breathe in and out. Take a moment to feel your life force pulsing. Then notice if your chest feels tight or expansive, feel the temperature around your heart, and then tense and release your upper rib cage, if it feels good to so.

Now, moving your awareness down to your stomach, feel your waistband against your skin, if you're wearing pants. Tune into all the organs in this area of your body. Feel if your stomach is heavy and full or light and empty, then observe any sounds you may hear from your digestive process. If you notice yourself judging your body in any way, forgive your inner judge, then bring your awareness back to your breath. And then, after registering all physical sensations with openness and curiosity, clench your stomach on an inhale, if it doesn't hurt to do so, hold, then exhale and release.

From here, shift your awareness down to your pelvis, noticing whatever sensations are present, tensing and releasing, and then shift your awareness down to your legs. Feel the weight of them on your bed, and if any skin is exposed, notice how it feels pressed up against your comforter or sheet. Is your bedding warm or cool against your skin? Next, tune into the physical sensations in your upper leg. Are your thighs and hamstrings tight or loose? Are your legs shaking or still?

Once again, if you find yourself judging your body, it's okay. Just come back to the moment and the breath, tensing and releasing your upper legs on an inhale and exhale, then repeating the same process as you move down to your calves and shins, all the way to your ankles.

And now you've found your way all the way down to your feet. Feel your toes against your socks or comforter and feel the weight of them resting on your bed. You may want to wiggle your toes or rotate your feet. Notice whatever sensations are present, whether they're tingly or sore or completely relaxed; whether they're hot, cold, or somewhere in between. And then, on an inhale, pull in your toes as if making a fist with your feet, hold for a few seconds, and release on your exhale.



Now that you've scanned from head to toe, and relaxed each muscle group one by one, allow your awareness to expand so that you're observing your body as a whole. Register how it feels to lie there, fully present in your body, having acknowledged every physical sensation and relaxed each part. Feel your breath moving through your body, from head to toe, as you breathe in and out. Then, on your next inhale, tense every muscle all at once, hold for a few seconds, then release and breathe out.

After going through this process, I often feel lighter, physically and mentally, and far more relaxed. And sometimes I feel just slightly better—and frustrated or even enraged, if I'm being completely honest (which I generally try to be). Every time is different, so try not to judge your experience. Just bask in whatever space and ease you've created, repeat the process if you think it might help, then see how this helps you drift off to sleep.

I hope this helps you sleep easier and feel better throughout your day!

What products are included in the **Mindfulness Kit**?

A **Soothing Bath and Shower Gel** that is formulated to calm your mind and condition and hydrate your skin

A lavender **Essential Oil Roll On** to ease tension and invite calmness and relaxation

A **Relaxing Pillow Spray** to encourage a peaceful night's sleep, that can be repurposed as a meditation mist

A **Lychee Flower Scented Candle** to uplift your spirit and awaken your senses

A **Daily Mindfulness Practice Guide** to break down the art of mindfulness into simple little rituals you can practice at morning, noon, and night.



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If someone you love would love this kit,
send them here to grab one for themselves!