

Mindful Self-Touch

A slow, sensory practice for building self-awareness and pleasure — and for letting go of the pressure to perform, to last, or to arrive anywhere at all.

TIME

20 minutes

Set a gentle timer so you needn't watch the clock.

HOW OFTEN

2–3 times a week

For at least four weeks, with a day between.

THE AIM

Sensation, not outcome

Arousal and orgasm are not goals here.

Before you begin

Choose a private, warm space where you won't be interrupted. Phone on silent and out of reach. You can be undressed or partly dressed — whatever feels comfortable rather than exposing. Have a blanket nearby, and an unscented oil or lotion if you'd like one.

This is a practice of curiosity, not a performance. There is nothing to achieve and no right way for your body to respond. If you notice yourself checking for a result, that noticing *is* the practice.

The practice

1 Arrive and breathe — 3 minutes

Lie or sit comfortably. Rest one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Breathe in through the nose for a count of four, out through the mouth for a count of six. Let the out-breath be longer than the in-breath; this is what settles the nervous system. Repeat ten times, feeling your belly rise into your hand.

2 Wake the senses — 2 minutes

Before touching, take an inventory. Name silently to yourself: three things you can hear, two things you can smell or taste, and the temperature of the air on your skin. This moves you out of your thinking mind and into the room you are actually in.

3 Begin at the hands — 3 minutes

Touch one hand with the other as though you have never met it. Trace the palm, the webbing between fingers, the inside of the wrist. Change the pressure — feather-light, then firmer. Change the speed. Notice which your skin prefers today. You are touching **for your own interest**, not to produce a feeling in the hand.

4

Travel outward — 8 minutes

Move slowly through the body, staying away from breasts, chest and genitals for now. Give each area about a minute: forearms, upper arms, throat and jaw, face and scalp, belly, hips, thighs, calves, feet.

Every time your mind wanders — to the day, to how you're doing, to whether this is working — simply return to the point where your fingers meet your skin, and to the longer out-breath. Wandering is expected. Returning is the skill.

5

Rest and close — 4 minutes

Let your hands come to stillness, resting wherever feels easy. Take five more long out-breaths. Before you get up, ask yourself one question: *where in my body did I feel most awake?* There is no need to answer in words.

When something arises

If arousal comes: welcome it, and keep the pace exactly as it is. You don't need to follow it, build on it, or stop it. Let it rise and fall like any other sensation. Resist the pull to make it go somewhere.

If you feel numb or nothing much: that is information, not failure. Slow down further, try a lighter pressure, and check your breath — numbness often sits alongside breath-holding.

If you feel anxious, tearful or far away: pause. Open your eyes, press your feet into the floor, name five things you can see. You can stop at any point; stopping well is part of the practice. Bring it to our next session.

Building the habit

Practise two to three times a week for four weeks. Keep the sessions short and regular rather than long and occasional — the nervous system learns through repetition, not intensity.

Stay with non-genital touch for the first two to three weeks. Only when this feels genuinely unhurried should you extend the same quality of slow, curious attention to the whole body, including the genitals — still with no goal of arousal or orgasm, and still with the long out-breath.

Afterwards, jot down a line or two:

- What kind of touch did my body respond to today?
- Where did my mind go, and what pulled it back?
- What was it like to have no goal?

This handout supports, and does not replace, individual therapy. If the practice consistently brings up distress, pain or overwhelm, please stop and raise it with me.

Find out more

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