

Stretch It Out

Aim

To practice a mindful stretching exercise as another mindfulness tool.

Facilitator Resources

Space for students to move around, Facilitator Script or video link below.



Stretch it Out - <http://youtu.be/3kAGVHLXGAo>

Student Resources

Journal

Activity

- Students can sit at their desks or tables, or they can create a sitting circle on the floor.
- The Facilitator reads the script, (or plays the video clip) while students follow the instructions.

Facilitator Script

- Today we're going to try some mindful stretching.
- We're going to use this as an opportunity to explore some feelings in our body. There isn't only one right way to do mindfulness stretching, so listen to your body and stretch in a way that is comfortable for you as you listen to my suggestions.
- Today's stretching can be done from a standing or sitting position.
- If you are standing, come down to the floor in a comfortable position, maybe by crossing your legs... and if you are in a chair, I invite you to also make sure you are sitting upright
- comfortably...
- If you feel comfortable to do so, close your eyes, or lower your gaze to the floor in front of you... take a big breath in... and out... and in... and out... and in... and out... Now start by gently rolling your shoulders back...
- Stretch upwards... and down... do this a few times... up and down... and up... and down...



- Now we'll do some head rolls... start by rolling your head gently to the right... and around gently to the back... then to the left... now gently bend your head down... and back to the right side... and to the back again... to the left... and down to the front...
- Come back to the center position, roll your shoulder back one more time and sit up with good posture.
- If you are on the ground, come into a table position on all fours, where your hands are below your shoulders and your knees are below your hips... If you are sitting in a chair, place your hands on your knees and sit upright with good posture.
- Now with our backs flat, or straight... take a few deep breaths... Now we are going to arch our backs like a cat... take a deep breath in and fill your lungs, and then breath out and arch your back and squeeze all of the air out with your belly...
- Let's do that again... take a big breath and feel your belly expanding as your lungs fill... and then slowly breathe all of the air out as you arch your back - from your sitting position or if you are on all fours on the floor...
- Now let's sit up again slowly... if you are in a chair, sit up with good posture ... and if you are on the floor, stand up slowly with as little noise as possible... breathe gently...
- Now sitting or standing, calmly, make sure the bottoms of your feet are flat on the floor and place the palms of your hands on your thighs if you are sitting, or gently at your sides if you are standing...
- Notice your feet touching the ground... feel them rooted into the ground like roots of a tall tree... breathe in and breathe out...
- Now take your hands and, imagining you are a tall and strong tree, slowly raise your arms to the sky and stretch your fingers like branches reaching for the sunlight... reach, feeling that wonderful stretch from the roots of our toes to the branches of our fingertips...
- And now, if you feel balanced you can try a tree pose by slowly lifting one foot off the ground and balancing strongly on your other foot. It helps to focus your eyes on one specific spot in the room.
- If you feel steady, gently place the bottom of your foot to the side of your leg, just below the knee of the leg you are standing on...
- Balance here and take a gentle breath in and then out... place both feet back on the ground... and if you want to try again, take your other foot and raise it gently off the ground, staying rooted and balanced with one foot before bringing both feet back to the ground while your fingertips keep reaching gently to the sky.
- Breathe in, and breathe out, and then slowly bring your hands back to rest either on your lap or at your sides.
- Take one final breath in... and out... and smile because you have stretched your body and practiced mindfulness today.

Reflection Questions/Journal Prompts

- Did you enjoy this activity?
- What parts did you like or not like?
- Was it a new experience or is this something you are familiar with?
- Did mindful stretching help you feel more calm and focused?
- When do you think mindful stretching might be helpful?