

# Mindfulness Exercise for New Mothers

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New motherhood can be wonderful. At the same time it can be immensely challenging. Mindfulness practices such as the one set out below can be extremely beneficial, particularly in this season of life when we are especially vulnerable to self-doubt, anxious thoughts and mood disorders. They help us to be present – to become aware of our feelings, needs and thoughts, and to respond to them in a healthy and compassionate way. That is, without judgement and without falling into our thoughts – rather, observing them, acknowledging them and moving forward with a sense of groundedness. Mindfulness exercises can also help us to nurture our intuition, as we practice paying attention to our body and our feelings.

The body scan exercise below is just one way to tune into yourself; in my book, *Nurturing Your New Life*, I list additional mindfulness practices that might work for you. I also provide information to help you understand mindfulness further. The benefits are real and astounding.

I speak from personal experience when I tell you that while mindfulness practice may seem strange initially (is this even doing anything?), the more you practice, the easier and more instinctive it becomes; and the small time-investment it requires will pay you back in numerous important ways.

Heidi Sze x

# New Mother Body Scan

A moment for me to tune in and notice how I am feeling.

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Start by getting comfortable, then take a few slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Keep this up and when you feel ready, slowly take yourself through the following list, pausing at each prompt and observing how you are feeling. Try to do this with a curious and kind mind – by that I mean try to notice your feelings, and any thoughts that arise, without falling into them; acknowledge them, and then move on.

If your mind wanders off, don't worry – recognising your wandering thoughts and being able to bring your attention back to your body (again and again) is part of the process; that's the good stuff.

NOTE: if you have experienced trauma in relation to birth or your body in general, or if you are struggling with mental health issues, please seek guidance from a qualified counsellor before commencing this exercise.

My eyes feel...

My mouth feels...

My head feels...

My mind feels...

My chest feels...

My left breast feels...

My right breast feels...

My arms feel...

My back feels...

My belly feels...

My pelvic floor feels...

My legs feel...

My feet feel...

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A moment for me to tune in and notice how I am feeling.

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If you are able to spend more time with this exercise, try scanning other body parts. Depending on what is going on with your body you could include areas such as your nipples, ribs, womb, vagina, anus (haemorrhoids are quite common during pregnancy and after birth) and tailor the exercise to your needs. If possible try to do this exercise, or a different mindfulness one, every day.

A list of valuable resources for further support:

PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia) -  
<https://www.panda.org.au/>

COPE (Centre of Perinatal Excellence) -  
<https://www.cope.org.au/>

Mind the Bump Mindfulness Meditation App -  
<https://www.mindthebump.org.au/>

ABA (Australian Breastfeeding Association) -  
<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

For more information about my book try  
[here](#) (Australia), [here](#) (USA/Canada), or [here](#) (UK).

Or seek it out at your local independent bookstore.

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