



## BODY SCAN

This strategy is suggested in the 11-14 BrainWaves lesson: **My changing brain**

### About the strategy

Body scan exercises involve bringing focused, non-judgmental attention to different parts of the body, from the toes up to the top of the head. Unlike silent breath awareness, which can feel abstract or frustrating, focusing on physical body parts can provide a particularly concrete anchor for a wandering adolescent mind. Body scan exercises are shown to help relieve stress and anxiety by helping us notice where we hold physical tension, cultivating interoceptive awareness, and activating our "rest and digest" system (or parasympathetic nervous system). This encourages a reduction in physical muscle tension and emotional reactivity, promoting a state of calm and grounding.

### The scientific evidence behind the strategy

Research shows that body scan interventions are effective for stress reduction, emotional regulation, and improving sleep quality.

This study trialled the effectiveness of a 4-week guided body scan programme with first year university students and found improvements across a range of outcomes, including stress reduction and emotional regulation:

- Uzun, Y. (2026). *Examining the effectiveness of body scan meditation on stress among first-year university students*. Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, 33(1), pp. 40–48.

Although a very small sample size, this study provides evidence for the use of body scan meditation as a technique for improving both physical comfort and academic ease in schools, supporting children in coping more effectively with academic and bodily stressors.

- Srinidhi, V. and Rajaswathy, R. (2026). *Impact of body scan meditation on academic stress and pain among school students*. International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 8(2), pp. 1–8.

Although body scan was just one technique included within mindfulness-based interventions, this study showed promising results for overall adolescent wellbeing and mental health.

- Jobin, K., et al. (2025). *Mindfulness-based interventions for enhancing adolescent mental health and well-being: A scoping review*. Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health, 32, p. 101961.

### Further reading

This Headspace article offers a great guide to practicing the body scan technique:

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/body-scan>