



Recognise - Mindfulness of body

10 - Mindfulness of Posture

This document is an extract from the full chapter, which is available for download in the table via this link: <https://raft2freedom.org/raft-to-freedom-downloads/>

Yet it is just within this fathom-long body, with its perception and conceiving mind, that I declare that there is the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of the world.

- Gotama, Rohitassa Sutta (AN 4.45 / SN 2.26), translated by Thānissaro Bhikkhu

Having established mindfulness of breathing, we turn to the second lens of the first Anchor of Mindfulness: mindfulness of posture. This means simply knowing, clearly and directly, the position of our body as we move through life - sitting, standing, walking, lying down. Gotama pointed to the reality that our entire experience of the world, including our pain, difficulties and disappointments, happens through this body-mind process; attending to posture is therefore not a trivial matter, but a direct engagement with the immediate terrain we inhabit.

The body scan offers a structured way into this awareness, moving attention gently through the body with curiosity rather than judgment. Mindfulness of posture takes the same quality of attention into ordinary life: noticing how we hold ourselves, and the transitions between one posture and the next, without needing to correct anything. Research suggests this relationship runs both ways - our mood shapes our posture, and gently changing posture can, in turn, support a shift in energy or mood.

For our raft, this awareness is another essential tool we gather: it grounds us in the present, reveals unconscious habits, and gives us insight into our inner state, all of which help us understand the current trim of our vessel. The self-reflections that follow invite us to bring this same quality of attention to our own posture, right now.

Self-reflections

Take a moment right now to bring awareness to my posture:

- 1 Am I sitting, standing, lying down, or walking? Can I simply note this? ([view card](#))
- 2 Without judgment, what do I notice about how my body is positioned? Tension? Ease? Slouching? Uprightness? ([view card](#))
- 3 How aware am I, typically, of my posture as I go about my day - working, eating, watching TV, talking with others? ([view card](#))
- 4 Can I recall times I noticed a link between my posture and my mood or energy level? ([view card](#))
- 5 What habitual postures do I tend to adopt when feeling stressed, tired, sad or anxious? ([view card](#))
- 6 Have I noticed that changing my posture can change my mood? ([view card](#))
- 7 When I wake in the night and an uncomfortable thought arises, do I physically turn over in an attempt to get away from it? ([view card](#))

Journaling prompts

Explore your relationship with posture further in your journal:

- 1 **Posture check-ins:** for one day, set gentle reminders - every hour, say - to check in and note your body's posture without judgment. At the end of the day, write about any patterns or insights you noticed.
- 2 **Mindful adjustment:** when you notice yourself in a posture associated with discomfort or a low mood - slumped shoulders, for example - gently experiment with adjusting to a more upright, open, relaxed posture. Hold it for a minute or two. Journal about any shifts you perceive, physically or mentally. Remember, this is non-judgmental self-inquiry, not self-criticism.
- 3 **Posture during activities:** pay specific attention to your posture during a routine activity - eating a meal, brushing your teeth, working at a computer. Describe your typical posture and any sensations associated with it.
- 4 **Body scan connection:** if you practise the body scan meditation described in this chapter, reflect on how it increases your general awareness of posture and physical sensations throughout the day.
- 5 **The vessel's trim:** using the chapter's own metaphor, write about what your posture right now might say about the "trim" of your vessel - balanced and upright, or listing and taking on water?
- 6 **A postural habit worth changing:** name one habitual posture you'd like to soften or change. What's the smallest possible step towards noticing it more often?
- 7 **Turning over in the night:** if the seventh self-reflection resonated, write about what it might look like to meet a middle-of-the-night thought with stillness rather than movement, just once.

For a printable reminder to carry this stage's practice into daily life, see the Self-Compassion card: <https://raft2freedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/appropriate-response-self-compassion.png>

Remember to remember

Mindfulness of posture is a simple yet profound practice available in every moment. By cultivating awareness of how we hold and move our bodies, we anchor ourselves in the present, rebuild the vital mind-body connection, gain insight into our habits and emotional states, and develop a key skill for emotional regulation and self-compassion.

We can also gently explore the two-way relationship between posture and how we feel: notice first, perhaps make a small adjustment, and then notice again. Our mood can shape how we hold ourselves, while becoming a little more upright, open or relaxed may sometimes shift our energy, alertness or mood in return. This awareness is another crucial tool we gather for our raft, helping us recognise the immediate terrain of our embodied experience. As you move through your day, try weaving in moments of simply knowing how your body is positioned - a small, steady practice that prepares the ground for everything that follows.

No matter what posture you are in, if your mind is aware with understanding, you are meditating.

- Sayadaw U Tejaniya, Don't Look Down On The Defilements, They Will Laugh At You (2008)

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