

Ep #94: A Stillness Practice to Free Your Mind



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With Your Host

Susi Hately

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome back. With this particular episode, I want to help you into a space of peace, and stillness, and ease. So with this, I'm providing you a sample out of the Healing and Revealing Human Potential program where I guide them through a breath and stillness practice. All to bring you more into yourself, more into your body, free your mind, and settle in. So let's explore. Let's get cozy. Enjoy the practice.

Let's get cozy. So find a position, whether it's sitting or laying down. And you can be on a bed, you can be on a couch, you can be on the floor. The place that I want you to sort of play with though is can you be really comfortable? And then notice as you're setting yourself up, if you can be 5 or 10% more comfortable. And then what do you need for that level of comfort?

So maybe you need to put a hat on or put some socks on. Maybe you need a sandbag. Maybe you need a bolster underneath your legs. And then just really tune into yourself and to know where your sense of safety is, where your yummy spot is. In some cases, going into these places of relaxation, and the aim here is for down regulation. But sometimes as we're relaxing, it can feel discombobulating. Or we begin to feel things that we didn't know were there.

Kind of like when I wrote on my email last week. The email that I wrote on Tuesday that was meant to be for Friday, but I decided I would just send it on Tuesday because I sensed that probably there were other people out there in the world who were feeling sort of similar to me, where it's like you don't actually know what's there.

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So then as I was poised at my computer about to type that email, whatever email was going to come out of my fingers, I just felt that numbness and that like dam, and then I felt all the feeling. And so sometimes we don't even know that's there, right?

So sometimes when we start to recognize that those feelings are there, or other feelings that might be uncomfortable, just recognize that you don't have to go to them. You don't have to feel them if you don't want to. So if there's anything that's uncomfortable that's arising, you don't have to address it.

So you have that power, that even if my words sound like instructions and to-do's, you can to-don't. You could fall asleep if you'd like to, you could get up, you could sign off, you can do whatever you want. Just do what is the most nourishing thing for yourself.

We're going to work with just some basic relaxation work to begin. And then I'm going to walk you through an alternate body breathing exercise. And then we'll see where we're at from there and I'll either bring you back or we'll go a little further, we'll see.

So where I want to begin, if you want to join me, come down to your feet and just tune into your feet. Feeling your toes, and the forefoot, and the hind foot, like where your heel is and your ankle. And just connect to this experience in your foot, whatever it is that you're feeling there. And do your best to simply just feel it, which is different than thinking about it.

So you might feel some energy growing, or some warmth, or some other sensation that's there. You might also notice that you might need more bolsters or you might notice a chill, so you might need a blanket. So just kind of tune into that, and then if you need something, then certainly grab it.

And then come up into your shins and your calves. So that's the front and the back of your lower leg. And what's kind of cool about this part of our

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body, is that there are two bones here, the tibia and the fibula. And in between those bones is this membrane called the interosseous membrane.

Now, some of you might be able to perceive this area, others of you are going to be like, "What on earth is she talking about?" It's all right.

What I find really cool about this is that that tissue, that interosseous membrane, has similar, not same, but similar qualities to the dural tissue, so this is your brain, nervous system tissue. Which is kind of cool, doesn't mean anything, just kind of cool.

So then you can just feel your legs and consider that when your calves and your shins are really limited, like they have that tight feeling and the tissue feels shortened or kind of gripping like Saran wrap around your leg, that maybe there's a lack of breath. Like from an imagery standpoint, a lack of breath.

So see if you can just allow for some breath to enter into the space if that's your experience. Imagine that instead of breathing through your nose, as crazy as this might sound, that you breathe through your shin and your calf. And if you can perceive these two bones, the tibia and the fibula, maybe even the space between them, imagine you can breathe through there.

And then take whatever experience from your foot and your shin and calf area up into your knee. How your knee is the midway point between your feet and your hips. And then up into your thighs and how your thighs connect into your pelvis.

So you have this big, long limb between the hip and the foot, and this tissue of muscles and fascia and all sorts of other juicy stuff like nerves and fluid, lymphatic fluid, and blood. And allow your legs to become heavy and warm. Allow your legs to become heavy and warm.

And then become aware of your pelvis. So feel either side of the pelvis, it's the outside edges of the pelvis. Notice if you can perceive the pubic bone

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and the sacrum. Some call this area an area of sacred power. And feel the space between your pubic bone and your navel.

Sometimes people find it difficult to breathe into this area, so just notice on first pass if the breath can be felt here or not. You don't have to change it. See if you can simply notice. And then move up into your abdomen, to the ribcage.

And remember how our belly moves with the inhale because of the pressure change with that inhale mechanism. So the diaphragm drops as the ribs expand, the belly moves open, or forward, or wide, whatever word works. And then as the diaphragm comes back up and the ribcage settles back, the belly returns back to start and the cycle continues.

And it's very possible this is not moving as fluidly as you would like it to. It's all right, it's all right, it's a really good whisper awareness. See if you can be with what is. Really try not to change it, just allow it to be what it is.

And then up to your ribcage and as you're breathing, again, notice how the ribs are moving with your inhale and your exhale. And just connect now between the ribs and your pelvis, notice what's going on with that breathing mechanism and how the body is moving with your inhale and your exhale.

All right, so now from the ribcage, let's move outwards toward the shoulders and to your armpits. And can you breathe through the armpits kind of like you did with the calves, just imagine that you're breathing through those armpits.

The armpits are kind of fascinating anatomically because what creates the inner and outer borders of the armpits are muscle and fascial tissue. And there's marma points in there too. And I don't know a lot about the marma system per se, but I know that there's some really interesting massage techniques from that perspective in and around the armpit. There's also massage techniques around lymph flow that we utilize from a Western medical perspective.

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So just imagine this idea of breathing through the armpits. And then notice what's happening when you do that through your jaw, or your face, or your torso. Just kind of recognize how, like a pebble and the ripples from the pebble, the ripples of that awareness of breath in the armpits, if that changes anything else in your system.

And then down your arms. So just allow your attention to move through the upper arm to the elbow. And then from the elbow, through the forearm to the wrist and to your hand. So feel this chain from the shoulder armpit area all the way down to the fingers, the palms. And can you let those arms and hands be heavy, heavy, heavy, and warm? Can you let your arms and your hands be heavy and warm?

Okay, so now notice from the neck through your ribcage, and abdomen, and pelvis, down through your legs and your feet. And feel your heels up towards the base of your neck. So feel the cylinder, almost, of yourself, front and back, torso and limbs. Feeling like the limbs and the torso as physical entities, but also the space between them.

So space between your legs if there is any, space between the arms and the torso, maybe between the knee and the floor. Whatever your body parts aren't touching versus what they are touching. And then start to move through your neck connecting with your face and your head, your skull and your ears.

And bring your attention to the inner corners of your eyes. The outer corners of your nose, like on the outside edges of those nostrils. And just let your attention sit right in that section of your face, if it's comfortable, and just breathe really easier.

Stay with your breath. Pull your brain or your thinking back to your breathing. All right, now connect with your head again and your face. Coming back into your torso, land somewhere in your body where you can feel comfortable and at ease so that you can breathe a little more.

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We're now going to move into another breath practice here. And if you need to get up, go to the bathroom, or grab some other stuff, or move your positions, then go ahead and do that. I'm going to just kind of keep walking through, for the next minute or so, just some connection with your body. And in about a minute, a minute and a half, I'll kind of move you through the next breathing exercise here.

So while we're waiting and giving space and time for people to get whatever they need to get, can you bring your attention to your pelvis? Now where I'm about to go, and I want to give lots of space for you, so if this is not a comfortable place you can either mute me or just ignore me. Or take my instructions to another part of your body.

We're going to go to the pelvic floor here, something that I call orifice breathing. So if the pelvic floor is not a place you want to go, you could always use the orifices of your eyes, or your mouth, or your ears, that would work too.

I want you to imagine breathing through the orifices of your pelvic floor. Now in some cases you might be disconnected from the area, you might not be able to feel it, it might feel tight, it might feel numb. So just perceive whatever it is that you can perceive.

And if you're up in the eyes, or your ears, or your mouth, then just play around with the idea of breathing through your eyes, your ears, your mouth. And what I mean by mouth, I don't mean like "Uh-uh-uh" I don't mean that, that I mean, like if you're breathing through your ears, you're not really breathing through your ears, you're not really breathing through your eyes. But you're just imagining that that is where the energy of prana, we can use it in that perspective, is coming through into your system.

So we're not forcing, if you're in the pelvic floor area, we're not forcing the pelvic floor to go one way or the other. You're just bringing your attention to the orifices of your pelvic floor. Whatever it is that you can actually feel. So

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maybe you only can feel part of one orifice. Maybe you can feel it only on one phase of breath, that's totally fine.

Okay, now come back up into your torso and notice if anything now feels different. Not that it needs to, it's more about having gone through this guided relaxation, this guided awareness and whether you did the orifice breathing down in the pelvis or up in your face, just notice what is now happening. What was the result?

So now tuning into your breathing in your torso and your belly, feel the breath coming through your nose and feeling the waves of the breath coming in and going out. It's kind of like you're on a boat on water and the waves are taking you up and bringing you down.

And then take your awareness to your left hand and imagine you can breathe through your hand and then feel through the whole arm and the shoulder. And imagine you can breathe through the arm and the shoulder back up to that armpit. And then feel that whole left side. The left arm, the left leg, the left torso.

Lovely. All right, now come over to the right. So feel the right hand, the right forearm and the arm and breathe through that right hand, forearm, and arm. Right up to that armpit and then down through the right torso and the right leg. So, you're breathing through the whole right side of your body.

And then from here, breathe through your whole body. So both arms and hands, both legs, the whole torso. Okay, perfect. We're going to move into an alternate body breathing, like alternate nostril but using the body. So you're going to begin on, let's begin on the right side.

So you're going to inhale through the right side, so the whole right side of your body. And then exhale through your left side. Inhale through the left side of your body, and then exhale through the right. And then inhale through the right and exhale through the left.

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Now you move on your own rhythm here, we're going to do this for a few minutes. And I'll just come back periodically through these few minutes to check in, to make sure, or to support you to come back to presence with your breath.

So just going one side in, the other side out. And then in through that other side and then out through the first. Feeling the quality of your breath. Feeling how each phase is being expressed. Feel the phases. Okay, then do one more cycle so that you're ending up breathing out the right side. And when you do that and come back to full body breathing, so you can breathe through both sides of the body equally.

And then tune back into the movement of your actual breath, the air coming in through your nose. The air leaving your nose or your mouth, depending on how you're breathing. How your breath is moving through your torso, and your belly, and your pelvis. Noticing just how your body is experiencing itself now and how you are experiencing your body.

Okay, take another five breaths. When you finish your fifth exhalation, slowly begin to tune in to what's around you. Just gently open your eyes. And if you need to move your body, stretching it out, or moving your feet, or moving your pelvis, or your shoulders, or your ribs, do that.

And then just notice what's now present for you. And in some cases, this may have been a coping strategy for you where it was like a relief and it kind of gave you some extra fuel in your tank as you settle out your nervous system. And for others, it might be kind of like, "Ooh, I just got a whole bunch of really cool insight for what's possible."

Some of you might be feeling super tired. Or you might have noticed that maybe other thoughts or experiences, like anxiety, or depression, or concerns, or worries, those may have bubbled up while you were relaxing in. Then just ask those, if it's one or some, what the message is that they have for you.

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So if you want to just take this a step further, it's like remembering this idea of these sensations or symptoms can be a problem to solve. A problem doesn't mean it's bad, it just means that it's something to solve. And there's also a message there too. And what's that message? And you can ask that of like whether it's a problem to solve or whether you're feeling really good now.

You can even ask that really good feeling, "All right, what's the message here?" Sometimes we only do the messaging work when it's a problem we want to get rid of, right? But we can really improve our endurance for feeling good when we can get aware of what those messages are for us, yeah. So just tune into that inner wisdom.