

# Mindful Movement

## An e-guide to help you move more mindfully

Learning to master mindful movement is like developing any other skill, it just takes a little time and practice. Eventually, you will be able to tune into your movement at any time of the day whilst doing any simple task.

This guide will be short and sweet, providing a little wisdom for you to take away and prep the mind before guiding yourself into more difficult practices. I use the same technique to help guide myself through my own practices with greater awareness.

First of all, let's explore why mindful movement is such a powerful tool to possess. Just like how you can use meditation to help quiet the mind and have greater control over your emotional states, you can use mindful movement to improve body awareness, develop physical skills quicker, and help reduce injury and movement-related pain.

For this exercise, you will need to use your imagination - your mind powers your entire nervous system, therefore your imagination is a powerful tool when connecting to muscles and movement.

1. Find a comfortable position to sit and close your eyes
2. Take a few deep breaths into the belly, inhaling almost as much air as you can, and then exhaling it completely
3. Bring your concentration towards your pinky - to do this, bring the breath back to a fairly normal depth, with each inhale, expand your belly, and with each exhale, pretend the breath is being expelled outwards through your pinky
4. To further develop this connection imagine the exhale travelling out of the lungs, through your chosen arm, flowing through the forearm, wrist, hand, and flowing out of your pinky
5. After a minute or two (or as long as you like) of this exercise, take a moment to notice how your pinky feels

Do you feel more connected? What sensations are you feeling at the tip of the pinky? Tingling, sensitive, warm/cold? How is your emotional state - do you feel calm, relaxed, and/or focussed?

This exercise can be applied to anywhere in the body, using our imagination to bring awareness to different areas and connect to movement, joints, and muscles. Sometimes we want to focus on the entirety of the movement, at other times we want to separate out specific muscles and engage them the most. It can be difficult to imagine physical breath coming out of certain muscles (cue fart jokes), so try replacing the idea of breath with imagining a trail of energy, light, or even blood, moving towards these areas. This exercise is especially powerful when connecting to muscles using specific isolation exercises, enabling you to connect physically and mentally at the same time.

Let's take the bicep curl for example - this exercise is particularly great because you're also able to see the muscle contract, stimulating another sense to help you connect. I appreciate you may already know how to connect to your bicep or perform a bicep curl, but this is an example of how to connect to any muscle - minus the visual component, depending on the movement.

1. Find a comfortable position sitting or standing and take a few deep breaths to focus on the task
2. Extend one arm directly in front of you at shoulder height facing the palm upwards. You should be able to see your inner elbow and the small raise in the upper arm where the bicep attaches
3. Make a fist with the hand and bring your fist towards your shoulder - your bicep has to contract for this movement to occur. Watch the bicep contract and extend as you move your arm in and out of this position
4. Now that you understand the physical movement, we can connect to this muscle through our breath
5. Perform the contraction portion of the movement (fist to shoulder) on the inhale and the extension on your exhale. Perform this movement with a slow, rhythmic breath and add a 'squeeze' at the peak of the contraction to fully connect to the bicep. A reminder to imagine breath, energy, light, or blood flowing back and forth as you breathe
6. Finally, try this exercise without a visual aid, and see if you can better connect to your bicep and feel the muscle just through the movement

Do you feel more connected?

I believe anyone is completely capable of developing this skill on their own, but like any skill, it's usually easier to master if you have someone guiding and developing it with you. This guide has been designed as the basics to master connection to all muscles and is completely yours to use.

If you liked this guide, check out my 4-week course *Mindful Movement 1 - Foundations of Mindful Movement*. There are also Mindful Movement 1 - mobility and connection classes available weekly. They are designed for complete beginners and anyone is welcome to join. The weekly classes are designed to be followed after the course to keep you accountable and further develop your connection however the course is not a prerequisite. See details on my website or if you have any further questions, you can also drop me an email.

This guide was developed and written by Evelina Sjardin.