

When You are Out of Your Mind, Get Into Your Skin.

The Recuperative Power of Your Tactile Sense.

Next time you feel pain instead of doing prescribed stretches or exercises explore the following practice. Next time you feel stuck in a problem or out of sorts instead of trying to think it through, take a little break with this exploration.

Over the years the power of this practice has proven useful in many ways. People report using the practice to reconnect with themselves when life is chaotic, others have found doing this practice has significantly reduced physical ailments, and others report feeling like they feel safe in their own skin for the first time in years. The results surprised me.

The instruction to move from the tactile sense came in a response to watching students move in a way that felt to me disconnected and ahead of themselves or internal and narrow in their attention. Movements looked prescribed or controlled even when the instruction wasn't prescribed. I was looking for a way to ignite physical presence without having people focus internally, cutting off the world, the way a focus on breathing does. Attending to the feeling of the ground and the world thru the skin while registering the pleasure of the movement did the trick. Here was mindfulness in motion with a broad field of attention. It can take a little time to switch to this attention. When a person does there's a recognition of something powerful going on. So simple. So good. So whole

This is Mindfulness in Motion: Moving from your tactile sense, especially when felt as your whole skin surface, brings you to the moment. This is a direct experience of mindfulness in motion. In this experience your attention isn't internal or external. You are in an expanded field of attention.

Recuperation: Visual, auditory senses dominate most of life's activity. The senses located in your head, the limb of perception, coordinate most of your activity. They give you information about the world around you - sight, sound, smell and taste. The tactile

sense is also an externally focused sense. But, it is dispersed throughout your system, more like the senses that are internal, telling you about you, telling you how you are responding to the world. Moving from this field of sensation is deeply recuperative.

Self-righting: Letting your skin sense lead and lingering in pleasant sensations makes space for your inner-compass to be heard and felt. Small micro-movements unravel strain or a tiny turn releases a distorted joint, insight about a problem at work pops into your mind. This practice is a preventative healing practice. It seems to unravel troubles before they take hold.

Preparation or A simple method to switch from fear to ease:

Draw shapes in the air with a continuous unbroken smooth easy movement at slow pace, like you have all the time in the world. Draw waves, circles or free form shapes. You could simply sweep to one side of you and back to other like you are showing the waves on the beach rising and receding. A slow simple continuous movement will calm you, will extend your exhale naturally.

Step 1. Your Tactile Sense:

1. Choose a surface near you. This could be the edge of your laptop, the fabric on your thigh, a table top or cushion on the couch.
2. Feel along the surface as if you are feeling for a slight chink in the surface.
3. Whatever pace you were moving the first time, slow it down by half as if you realized you wouldn't be able to detect the little chink at that first speed. It is as if you are listening with your touch, seeing with your skin.
4. Switch from feeling for a chink to simply noticing what the surface feels like. Is it warm or cold? Soft or hard? Bumpy or smooth? What can you learn about this object by touching it?
5. Now instead of touching the surface with your fingertips, touch it with more of you, all the sides of your hand, your forearm. Move quite slowly, like you are listening with your skin. Perhaps linger in the pleasure of the feeling of the object touching you, like an animal scratching her back on a tree. Notice how contact is both ways; you touch the

surface and the surface touches you.



Step 2. Whole Body Skin-sense, Mindfulness in motion:

1. Lay down and be still for a moment.
2. Sense the earth underneath you, supporting you. Notice the ocean of air that surrounds you.
3. Gently feel the contact of the ground next to you with your hand, as you did in step 1.
4. Once you feel you are really moving from the tactile sense, this can take a moment, begin to use more and more of your skin surface. Move as if you were discovering the world around you through your skin sense. You might imagine being a single cell creature morphing and moving. You are curious about the feeling of the ground and the feeling of the air. You aren't 'deciding' where or how to move, you are feeling the world thru your skin. Your interest, your sensation moves you. Sometimes it can help to compare moving from sensation with moving from the idea of moving. Explore the different feeling between moving by saying: "I am going to curl into a ball." with "I am feeling the ground on my side, enjoying the changing shapes I feel." It can take a little time to switch to this whole skin surface tactile sense.
5. Simultaneously to this sensing of the contact with air and ground, your system will give you information about your experience of the movement. Some shapes will feel so good others not so good. You don't have to put your attention on your 'body'. Useful information about your movement will come to you. All you are doing is feeling the world through your skin and following whatever feels good. I call this following the 'yum factor'. Linger in shapes that feel delicious. You might be curled into ball at one moment, arched back the next and expanded like a star after that. No right or wrong, just following your curiosity or your sensations. Have you felt the ground with your back, your belly, your sides. If you were painting your body with the ground, are you all painted? If you were getting a massage from the planet, are you fully massaged? Pause and rest now and again. Let movements be tiny. Let movements be large.
6. As you move this way play with your speed or pace. If you ask yourself to feel more details or linger in the pleasure of a shape you will find yourself moving in slow motion.
7. Stop whenever you are done.

Going Deeper: The Introduction to the Wholeness in Motion™ class starts with this process. If you like this process I encourage you to experience it in the context of a whole class. Here is a link to [2 Introductory videos](#).