



Mid-Winter Checkup

Mind-Body Body Scan for Self-Awareness,
Stress-Release and Clarity to Move-Forward

1. What are you celebrating?

Set a timer for 30 seconds. What do you have to celebrate from the past year? Consider all areas of life. Write as much as you can in 30 seconds in the space below:

2. Head and Face Awareness

Close your eyes and bring your awareness to your head and face. Where do you feel tension? What else do you notice? What thoughts are floating through your mind? Give yourself a few moments to bring your awareness to your head and face and when you're ready, record your observations below.

3. What messages did you give yourself in the last year?

With your awareness tuned in to your mind, notice what messages you are giving yourself right now. Are these familiar? What messages do you recall giving yourself the most in the last year?

4. Release Exercise: Ugly Face

This exercise is a quick practice to help you release the tension and shake up your habits of thought. Take 1-2 minutes to make a series of ugly faces. Make an effort to move your face in a way that allows you to feel and experience as many muscles in your face, ears, scalp and back of head as possible. I

Take this exercise one step further by setting an intention to release negative or unhelpful thoughts, self-messages and self-limiting-beliefs as you move through your creation of a series of ugly, stretchy faces.

I invite you to record what happens in the space on the next page.

5. Record Your Ugly Face Observations Here

6. What did you learn in the last year?

We can learn from our negative-self talk. What new wisdom have you gained in the past year?

7. Neck and Shoulders Self-Awareness

Now bring your awareness to your neck and shoulders and chest, Notice your posture. Notice your breath. Is your breathing relaxed, deep from your diaphragm, or is it shallow, high up in your chest and shoulders? Where do you have pain and tension? Dig a little deeper and be curious about times when you experience tension or pain in your neck, shoulders or chest. Make a note of what you notice below.

8. When have you been in survival mode, or experiencing “fight or flight” this past year? What has triggered this stress response in you?

Thoracic (chest) breathing – When we’re stressed, the diaphragm cannot move fully and breath moves to the upper chest and shoulders. This is called *secondary breathing*. During the fight-or-flight stress response, this creates the quicker, shallow breaths we need for a full physical survival reaction, but can create agitation and habitual tightness when we don’t play out these physical responses.

Jot down a few examples when you remember having this response in the past year.

9. Exercise: Shoulder Roll

I now want to give you an opportunity to release tension that you hold in your shoulders. With your eyes closed, roll your shoulders forward and up on the inhale, and back and down on the exhale. With each round, invite the possibility that your body can learn new ways to respond to stress triggers that are out of your control. With each round, imagine that you can train your body to respond with deep breath and release rather than shallow breathing. It may help you to jot down what you observe before and after this exercise.

10. What heavy loads have you carried on your shoulders in the past year?

Bring your attention back to your shoulders. Recall through your muscle memory times in the past year when you've felt weighed down. What/ whose loads have you been carrying? Make a note of anything that has felt like a heavy load to bear.

11. Exercise: Send Gratitude

Place your hands on your shoulders and/or neck in a way that feels comforting and healing. You may want to massage or you may choose stillness. Close your eyes and send gratitude, thanks and compassion to your shoulders. You may send a message like, “Thank you for bearing heavy loads.”

12. Heart: Cultivating Compassion

Take a moment now with closed eyes. Place your hands on your heart and tune in to its beating. Notice how you feel with your hands placed on your heart.

Ask yourself:

- How have I suffered in 2017?
- How well have I felt in 2017?
- How have I loved in 2017?
- How have I been loved in 2017?
- How is my heart right now?

13. Heart: Cultivating Compassion

Jot down the ways in which you've loved and been loved in 2017.

14. Exercise: Cultivating Compassion

Place your hands on your heart, close your eyes, and state the following out loud:

May I be free from suffering

May I be well

May I be happy

May I have love and be love.

15. Exercise: Cultivating Compassion

Now bring to mind someone you love. This should be someone you find easy to love. A pet, a child a very easy friend, maybe. Someone who you want to be sure feels the strength of your love in 2018. Keep your hands on your heart and keep this person in your mind. And say:

May you be free from suffering

May you be well

May you be happy

May you love and be loved

16. Exercise: Cultivating Compassion

Now, to cultivate even more love and compassion in 2018, bring to mind someone for whom you have tense or negative feelings. Maybe someone you've had some tension with. Maybe someone you haven't spoken to in some time. Maybe someone who brings up intense feelings, if you feel ready.

With this person in mind, repeat the same:

May you be free from suffering

May you be well

May you be happy

May you love and be loved.

17. Heart Reflection

In the year ahead....

- Who do you want to feel your love? Who can you most devote your loving kindness and attention?
- By whom do you most want to welcome in love and be loved by?
- What cause do you wish for your loving-kindness to have in the world?

Record your answers below.

18. Exercise: Shake it Out; Let it Go

With your eyes closed, scan the rest of your body. Be curious about each tiny area of your body. Where do you feel strength? Where do you feel tension? What else do you notice? When you're ready, take as much time as you need to dance, shake and wiggle. While doing this, repeat, "shake it out, let it go."

19. Rapid Goal Setting for this New Year

Give yourself 1 minute to answer the following with no judging or re-writing. Just get something down on paper:

- What's one goal for your work?
- What's one goal/intention for your relationships? Perhaps you want to break this down by friends and family
- What's one goal for your own health and well being?
- Goal for how you are contributing to the betterment of the world?

20. Powerful Requests

What support would you like to have in meeting your goals in this new year?

Write down the support you'd like to attract into your life:

.Consider asking for help among people in your networks, the [Conspiring Women](#) Facebook group. Or, book some time with me for a [coaching session](#) (or another trusted coach).