



Interoceptive Awareness

Your superpower!

What is Interoceptive Awareness?

Noticing and processing the physical sensations that arise from within the body.

Examples: hunger, fullness, thirst, pain, heart rate, temperature

They help translate the body's signals into choices that meet our needs.

But I Can't Trust My Body!

We feel we cannot trust our body's signals, but can our body trust us?

We override our needs and wants, which disconnects us from our body's signals.

This results in a diminished capacity to care for ourselves.

Common Barriers to Interoceptive Awareness

dieting

stress

lack of sleep

chaotic or demanding schedule

mental or physical health conditions

history of trauma

How to Build Interoceptive Awareness

Practice Mindfulness

Instead of letting your thoughts or feelings carry you away, practicing mindfulness teaches you how to notice and name what you experience. It also helps you learn how to let go of judgments you have of yourself.

Connect Body Signals With Emotions

Many of us have hard time naming our emotions. It may be easier for you to identify your emotions if you're able to connect your body's signals with your emotions. This not only helps you tune into the signals from your body, but it helps you understand how you personally experience each emotion, which will make it easier to identify in the future.

Practice Body Curiosity

Body curiosity is what it sounds like - practicing being curious about your body. The key is to remove judgment from the equation. There's nothing your body is doing that is bad or wrong, it's all just information. Try keeping a body curiosity journal to get in the habit of checking in with your body, so you can pick out patterns and learn more about how you physically experience emotions..

BODY SCAN PRACTICE

Get cozy. Start by getting comfortable. Lie down or sit in a position that allows you to stretch your limbs easily.

Focus. Close your eyes and begin focusing on your breath. Notice the sensation of your breath filling and leaving your lungs as you inhale and exhale.

Choose where to start. Begin anywhere you like — left hand, left foot, right hand, right foot, the top of your head. Focus on that spot as you continue breathing slowly and deeply.

Pay attention. Open your awareness to sensations of pain, tension, discomfort, or anything out of the ordinary.

Go slow. Spend anywhere from 20 seconds to 1 minute observing these sensations.

Acknowledge. If you begin to notice pain and discomfort, acknowledge and sit with any emotions these sensations bring up. Accept them without criticism. For example, if you feel frustrated and angry, don't judge yourself for these emotions. Notice them and let them pass.

Breathe. Continue breathing, imagining the pain and tension decreasing with each breath.

Release. Slowly release your mental awareness on that specific part of your body and redirect it to your next area of focus. Some people find it helpful to imagine releasing one body part as they breathe out and moving on to the next as they breathe in.

Move along. Continue the exercise along your body in a way that makes sense to you, whether you move from top to bottom or up one side and down the other.

Note drifting thoughts. As you continue to scan across your body, note when your thoughts begin to drift. This will happen probably more than once, so don't worry. You haven't failed, and you can easily get your thoughts back on track. Just gently return your awareness to where you left off scanning.

Visualize and breathe. Once you finish scanning parts of your body, let your awareness travel across your body. Visualize this as liquid filling a mold. Continue inhaling and exhaling slowly as you sit with this awareness of your whole body for several seconds.

Come back. Slowly release your focus and bring your attention back to your surroundings.