

Turtle Relaxation Walk

The turtle relaxation walk is an excellent way for children to increase their mind/body awareness and practice mindfulness, (aka bringing attention into the present moment). As you guide them through the following relaxation walk, feelings of calm and relaxation are naturally invited into the present moment for experience.

The turtle relaxation walk is a wonderful way to practice attention to the present moment using an activity we do all the time: walking. As children are walking, we guide them in paying attention to their bodies and being very attentive to sensations and feelings that occur in the moment.

Find a quiet spot in nature to first practice, or a clear spacious floor. Take off your shoes and socks if possible. Guide your children using a calm, soothing voice. You can read the following script or create one of your own.

Turtle Relaxation Walk Script:

Let's begin by wiggling our toes. Really wiggle them and get them moving right where you stand. Now pause and pay attention to how your toes feel right now. Do they tingle a little from all that movement? Do they feel tired? As we walk today, we are going to pay very careful attention to our feet. What is it like to be your feet? How do they feel right now? [This helps children to bring their energy level down so that they are grounded and ready for the activity]

Today we are going to walk like turtles. Turtles are very silent, so we will practice silently. Let's begin by walking slowly in a big circle. As we walk today, we are going to walk very slowly like a turtle. Let's see how slowly we can walk with our attention on our walking.

Feel the grass, (or cold floor), beneath your feet. Is it soft or hard? As we walk we are feeling very relaxed and calm, like a turtle that is stepping slowly on the garden path.

If your attention wanders away, that's okay. Just simply return it to your walking.

Feel your legs go up and down, up and down. In your mind you can talk to your feet and legs. Let's try. As you walk, think: "Lifting. Moving. Stepping." Switch sides. Repeat this over and over with each step you take. "Lifting. Moving. Stepping." Feel your legs go up and down, up and down. One step at a time.

Now, let's try it even slower. Think "Lifting. Moving. Stepping." Switch. "Lifting. Moving. Stepping." Repeat until the energy feels calm and centered.

Wow, you have been excellent turtle walkers! Thank you for practicing such wonderful attention.

As you deliver the script, remember to provide lots of positive specific feedback and encouragement. Regardless of the outcome, simply showing up to practice is the first step to increasing awareness and getting on the path to skill mastery. Repetition is the key to re-programming the body and mind's ability to collaborate, relax and enhancing the experience of focused attention