

Developing Greater Body Awareness—Why Bother?
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Body-oriented holistic practices are based on the idea that the body is more than a container or machine that carries around our real self, our mind. Instead, the idea is that the body is alive. Experience is holistic, with thoughts, feelings, and body states intertwined. For example, when you think a fearful thought, your shoulders may tense and your breath may become shallow. When in a meditative state, your body is relaxed.

What are some experiences that greater body-awareness, especially mindful body-awareness, can encourage?

Body awareness can feel good. It includes feelings of vitality and of being alive, being vibrant, energized, relaxed. Spontaneous or relaxed movement feels good.

When we settle into our bodies, we can have a clearer sense of knowing who we are and what we feel. Sometimes people say “I feel more like myself.” It sometimes happens that my shiatsu clients begin a session undecided what to do about a situation, and at the end know what they want. According to Suzanne Scurlock Durana, “core embodiment” can also include: knowing what your boundaries are, feeling what’s right and what’s not, not absorbing others’ negativity or pain.

Sometimes we deaden body sensations or freeze into body stances or limit our physical movements to help avoid stirring up awareness of unpleasant or even overwhelming emotions or memories. Many practitioners who work with these states emphasize that it is important to have emotions and memories come to the surface in a way that is not overwhelming, that encourages perceiving that they are changeable and that a way forward exists. A strong sense of an embodied self or a strong bodily sense of safety can be helpful parts of this process.

So, whether for pleasure, personal growth, or resolving distress, greater body awareness, especially mindful body awareness, can be a part of the picture.

Suzanne Scurlock-Durana [Reclaiming Your Body—Healing From Trauma and Awakening to Your Body’s Wisdom.](#)

There are more readings about body/mind topics at www.pauladerry.com/readings.

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