

Guided Awareness – General Principles

The purpose of a guided awareness is to become increasingly aware. This can lead to the yoga nidra experience... in which one is aware but deeply internal.

The body should be in a position in which it can relax and surrender (eg shavasana)

The amount of detail should remain consistent for each part of the body (don't do excess detail on one part of the body and then skip over others)

Music / sound used – if any, should be non-distracting (not something one could sing a long to) a drone (as a tamboura), for example is acceptable, or silence.

Leave **silence** / pauses between phrases. Leave silence at the end – at least 3 minutes.

In all, the whole process should be about 10 minutes (including silence). Longer than 15 minutes can be painful and require extra protocols to coach them in how to handle pain.

Your voice should be NATURAL, but gentle and calming. Avoid sounding robotic, as if you are reading a script, avoid sounding excessively sing-songy, or excessively breathy. Avoid any use of your voice that would be a distraction. You are there to support a natural, individual process, by being as “out of the way”, yet “responsible” as possible.

A systematic survey of the physical body that moves in a particular direction – such as from right to left, from head to toe, or toe to head. “Paint” the body, from right to left, head to toe or toe to head or from the outside inside (eg. skin, to muscle, to bone, to organs). This can ultimately open the doorway to the non-physical (eg koshas, the Self etc, in whatever way the individual is ready to experience those subtle layers / aspects).

Progressively support the mind to move inward, gross to subtle, outer to inward.

The language should be consistent and repetitive. Repeat phrases such as “Bring your awareness to...”; “Be aware of...” or “Notice...” or “Become aware of...” or “Feel your...” etc. Or you can simply name the parts of the body progressively for example “Become aware of your body progressively, as I name each part – Right toes... right foot... left toes... left foot... right ankle... left ankle... the length of your right leg... the length of your left leg...”

You can start with the body, or to start with the space around the body to help the person draw inward... starting with being aware of sounds, smells, etc. around them.

The language should be consistent – for example, choose to say “Your toes” or “The toes”, but don't mix and match this. **DO NOT** use “our toes”

You can choose to direct a particular experience – eg light, heaviness, melting, softening.

Sample Guided Awareness Script (fill in required)

Principle	Example
Settle the body	<i>Settle your body into Shavasana (or the position being used)</i>
Preparation + Explanation	<p><i>We are going to do a guided awareness to help draw the mind and senses inward.</i></p> <p><i>As we progress, you may not hear everything I say – this is completely fine. You may even feel as if you are sleeping – this is also completely fine. Whatever happens for you is fine and just right for you right now.</i></p>
Breath awareness	<i>Allow your breathing to be easy and natural. As you relax, your breathing may become very subtle and faint, or your breathing may become long and deep. Whatever happens with your breathing is fine and just right for you right now.</i>
Saṅkalpa / Contemplation	Introduce a contemplation – a short, simple, neutral, a promise of the nature of the Self. Choose something appropriate to the students who are present.
Begin the inward drawing of the senses	<p>You can allow your mind to be at ease and to draw itself into this space. Be aware of the space around you... including any sound around you. You are in a safe, protected environment.</p> <p>Become aware of your whole body. Allow your body to lean heavily and completely into the support beneath you.</p>
Main Script – Body Awareness	<p>EXAMPLES (these can be adapted... the point is to remain consistent with a single theme or purpose, not to mix and match too many approaches)</p> <p>Aware of Toes to Head / Right Side & Left Side: <i>Be aware of your toes. Notice your right toes... your left toes. Be aware of [or “notice” / “become aware of” / “bring awareness to” / “feel” / “sense”] all 10 toes at the same time. Be aware of your ankles... right ankle... left ankle... now both ankles at the same time. Be aware of both of your legs... your right lower leg, right knee, right thigh, right hip... your left lower leg, left knee, left thigh, left hip. Now both legs at the same time. Be aware of your pelvis and your whole abdomen including your abdominal organs... Be aware of your whole chest... including your lungs and heart. Be aware of your whole back... etc [continue with back, right arm / hand / fingers, left arm / hand / fingers, neck, throat, face and head].</i></p> <p>Aware from Head to Toes – same as above but starting at the head</p> <p>Aware from the Skin In – <i>Become aware of your skin... be aware of all of</i></p>

	<p><i>the layers of skin covering your whole body... notice from your skin... inward. Become aware of all of the muscles of your whole body... be aware of each and every muscle providing strength to your whole body. Now notice deeper inward. Become aware of your bones.... All of your bones. Be aware of each and every bone supporting your whole body. Now notice inward. Become aware of the blood... being aware of the blood moving warmth and oxygen through your whole body. Notice more deeply inward. Become aware of all of the space in your body. Be aware of all of the space providing lightness to your body.</i></p> <p>Softening – Any of the above... but add “softening”... for example – <i>“Notice your toes. All of your toes. Now soften each and every toe.... Become aware of your feet... both feet. And soften your feet... etc.</i></p> <p>Allowing – Any of the above... but add “allow it to be just as it is”... for example – <i>“Notice your toes. All of your toes. Now allow each and every toe to be just as it is.... Become aware of your feet... both feet. And allow your feet to be just as it is... etc.</i></p> <p>Filling – Fill each part of the body with awareness or light – <i>“Notice your toes. Let each and every toe fill with awareness... Become aware of both feet. Let your feet fill with awareness... Be aware of the length of both of your legs... fill your right leg with awareness from your ankle, through your calf, knee, thigh and hip. Fill your left leg with awareness... etc.</i></p>
Repeat	Do a brief re-review of the main script... simply naming body parts previously name without any extra language or coaching.
Preparing for silence	<i>“Continue to be aware of your whole body... your whole body... through each and every layer... from the outside, all the way inward... you are that pure awareness.”</i>
Silence	4-10 minutes of silence (longer silence periods are acceptable for more experienced students, however some precautions about pain must be shared).
Breath Awareness	<i>Notice your breathing... be aware of your natural breathing, as it is. Take a fuller breath in, and an easeful exhale And again. Let your breathing be easeful and natural.</i>
Moving again	<i>You can wiggle your fingers and hands, toes and feet. You can move in any way that you like... bringing that inner experience of stillness and quietude with you, even as you move.</i>

CONTEMPLATION EXAMPLES:

- *“When the mind is settled, you abide in the Truth of being”* – Sage Patanjali
- *“The Self is here and now. You are always It.”* – Ramana Maharishi
- *“The greatest miracle is your own beingness... go to the source from where it has arisen”* – Nisargadatta Maharaj
- *“This kingdom is not to be found outside, but by turning your consciousness inward to perceive the Reality within you”* – Yogananda
- *“It is not a matter of becoming, but of Being. Remain aware of yourself and all else will be known”* – Ramana Maharishi
- *“When you become stabilized in your Self, the chatter of the mind with stop”* – Nisargadatta Maharaj
- *“The universe exists within the Self”* – Ramana Maharishi
- *“Be firm in your determination to realize that you are formless, pure Consciousness”* – Nisargadatta Maharaj
- *“There is never a moment when the Self is not. It is ever present, here and now”* – Ramana Maharishi
- *“Happiness is inherent in you, and is not due to external causes”* – Ramana Maharishi
- *“Behold, the kingdom of God is within you”* – Bible
- *“Your cells and your thoughts are more directly interconnected than you probably believe at present”* – Ken Dychtwald
- *“Every aspect of you is attached and related in some remarkable way to every other aspect of you”* – Ken Dychtwald