

**Devon Wildlife Trust – Bystock Pools Nature Reserve, nr Exmouth  
Mindfulness Walk**



**Park at the North entrance car park. Grid Reference: SY033 844**

Full Walk is approx. 1½ hours

Shorter Walk is approx. 1 hour

Walk at a natural and comfortable pace. Mindfulness is about focusing on the present. Let go of any distractions and bring your attention back to your surroundings. Remember be kind to yourself on the days where you find it more difficult to be mindful. Your thinking mind might distract you, this is completely normal. As you make your way round the Reserve pause, stop, look. Enjoy your walk.

- 1 Start at top of the meadow.
- 2 Take 4 deep breaths and have a good stretch.
- 3 Pause to look at your surroundings. What can you see? What can you hear? What can you feel?
- 4 Walk down the centre of the meadow. At approximately half way down close your eyes and feel the air on your face. Take 4 deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling steadily. Take note all the sounds you can hear. Can you tell what they are? How many different sounds can you hear?
- 5 Continue to the bottom of the meadow and through the gate.
- 6 Pick up a pine cone and study its form. Are there still seeds in the cone? Has the cone been eaten? Enjoy the shape and texture of the cone. If there are no cones find a tree and look at the texture and form of its bark.
- 7 Take the path to the right under the beech trees. Enjoy walking through the leaves, if you like, kick them up as you go!
- 8 Tune in to any sounds you can hear: birdsong, the rustle of leaves on the trees. Some sounds may not be pleasing but don't get annoyed by them, accept them and let them go.
- 9 Turn left onto the boardwalk. The boardwalks can be slippery so be aware!
- 10 At the corner of the boardwalk gently roll your shoulders forward 5 times and backwards 5 times. Feel the tension in your shoulders and neck ease. Bring your hands into fists by your sides. Scrunch them up as hard as you can and then slowly release the grip. Extend your fingers into a stretch. Tilt your head to one side then to the other, twice.
- 11 At the end of the boardwalk cross the ditch and bear left up the slope.
- 12 Bring your attention into your body but still be aware of all around you. Notice your posture, walk in a natural way, don't change your style. Walk at a comfortable pace.

- 13 Has your mind wandered? If it has bring it back to the present moment.
- 14 Enjoy the surroundings, what you can see across the valley? Any ponies? Is the Heather in bloom?
- 15 Go through the woods and then follow the path down the steps to the boardwalk. Watch out for the tree roots! Take your time there is no rush.
- 16 At the small ponds take a moment to stop and look around. What can you see? Depending on the season you could see frogspawn, dragonflies or lizards. Enjoy the views and take a moment to inhale and exhale deeply and have a good stretch.
- 17 Continue along the boardwalk through the valley until you reach the footbridge. Go over the bridge and walk up the steps. At the edge of the wood you can choose to extend the walk or return to the car park.
- 18 If you would like to extend the walk follow the instructions from number 19.  
  
If you would like to return to the car park turn left and follow the instructions from number 23.
- 19 Follow the path along the side of the wood. At the corner of the wood, before the lone pine tree outside of the fence, bear right on any of the narrow paths and go down to the pond.
- 20 When you reach the pond, pause and take a moment to take in the surroundings. Then take 4 deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling steadily. Stretch your arms above your head and sway like a tree, twice on each side.
- 21 Take a seat. Starting at your feet gradually flex and relax each muscle in your body. Focus on your breathing, take a deep breath in as you tense your muscles and breath out when you relax them. Take your time. Finish with your face: close your eyes and scrunch your face up and release.
- 22 Stay seated or continue to the bridge. Watch the water falling over the weir. Listen to the sound of the water or watch the ripples on the pond and any wildlife you see.
- 23 Retrace your tracks along the pond and back up the steps on to the heath Follow the fence line alongside the wood. Bear left over the large grassy area and up the stony track, turn right at the top and return to the meadow. Continue to be aware of anything you hear, smell or see.
- 24 At the top of the meadow reflect on your walk. What have you seen? Do you feel calmer? Take 4 deep breaths and roll your shoulders backwards and forwards five times.
- 25 Carry on with the rest of your day but try and keep a sense of calm.

**Remember happiness is achieved when you stop waiting for it and make the most of the moment you are in now.**

