

Pleasure In Yourself – Preparing For Your Practice

None of us have really been taught how to self-pleasure, and often what we are taught about it is that it's shameful and should be secret or invisible.

Pleasure In Yourself (sometimes called Mindful Masturbation, or Orgasmic Yoga Practice) is an opportunity to really spend time with our focus on our body, without judgement, first and foremost. For many of us this is not something we're used to. In order to do this effectively it helps to set aside dedicated time, space, and an intention for the session.

There's no right or wrong way to do this. Every body is different so finding what works for YOU is the key. This comes from experimentation so spend as much time as possible exploring your body and sensations, without judgement.

These notes are intended to give you some pointers on what to focus on in your practice, what to avoid, and some of the things which may come up for you as move through your practice.

There's quite a bit of detail here so I invite you to read it through a few times before setting up your practice (and maybe a few more times once you've done a few sessions) so that the ideas here have a chance to be absorbed.

There's also a separate document with tips on session structure and session content.

Intention and attention

This practice is based on Intention. Having an intention carries an implication that there is no need to actually achieve it, or even know how to do it. Intention is simply a practice of setting your awareness TOWARDS something, as a focus.

In this case the idea is to shift your focus from the external (thoughts, judgements, frustration, distraction) to what is within your body.

To help you do this you're invited to bring your attention – your focus of awareness – to **what you notice in your body moment to moment.**

Notice what's there, what isn't there; what feels familiar, what feels unfamiliar; what feels interesting, what feels challenging; what you want more of, what you want less of.

When you notice something, you become more present to it, and then you have more choice about what to do with it.

Distraction and resistance

Whenever you notice your focus drifting from your body find a way of returning it there gently.

As with mindful meditation, your distractions ARE the practice. Meaning, that what you do when you are distracted to enable yourself to come back to your body IS your practice.

NOTICING resistances and difficulties without judgement is a major component of any practice.

Notice if your attention drifts, or awareness becomes vague, with any particular area of the body. If so, spend time with this area and try to sense more about how you feel there.

Be curious about anything you experience, but don't feel you HAVE to react to that experience. By giving us sensations the body simply wants us to pay attention to it, it is the mind which wants us to 'do something' about it.

Change: during your practice, the moment you do notice distraction or resistance try changing something about what you are doing. Change the speed or depth of your breath; or the sound you are making; or the kind of touch you are giving yourself. We tend to

respond with curiosity and engagement to something new so this may help you bring the focus back to your body.

What do 'pleasure' and 'orgasmic' mean?

Don't mix up ejaculation and orgasm!

Orgasm, or orgasmic sensation, can occur in the body without ejaculation and – for those with a penis - without even having an erection. Erotic energy and arousal can often be present without the genitals reaching a point of more obviously sexual engagement.

We often think of pleasure as involving heightened sensation. But there can also be a lot of simple enjoyment in connecting with a part of yourself you don't connect with often. Or bringing some different attention to a part you know well. This could be a physical part of your body – and it could also be an emotional part of yourself.

Forget about what you 'think you know' about your body – either good or bad. This practice is a chance for you to explore beyond those boundaries, with curiosity and without judgement... see what your body can tell you about yourself.

Body responses – what do you feel?

Orgasm is the body's way of releasing energy: energy can be released in many ways, including ejaculation, laughter, crying, or body shaking... but also in much more subtle ways...

Subtlety: For everyone what feels orgasmic will be different so the practice is really about starting to find out what 'orgasmic' means for YOUR body. One of the major surprises for me when getting into this practice was the realisation that a lot of orgasmic feeling can actually be incredibly subtle! So try to really notice even the tiniest of sensations and feelings and don't dismiss them as not being big enough, but stay with them, try to repeat them (or the actions that produced them) and explore how focussing the attention on them might amplify their importance for you.

Find what gives YOU pleasure – for some people pain can be pleasurable, for example.

When you're noticing and reflecting, either during or afterwards, even finding that you're noticing or feeling nothing can actually be something, and is a valid response, so note it and acknowledge it if that happens, don't dismiss feeling nothing as insignificant.

Porn and fantasy

Many people find that their self-pleasure, or masturbation, involves porn or fantasy.

However, these can often take our focus away from the body.

Ideally you should try not to include these in your mindful practice, in order to give yourself the best chance of focussing on your body, but there is no right or wrong, and no judgement.

If you do feel you need to access porn or fantasy during your practice, try to limit its use to a maximum of 5 minutes at the beginning of your practice (unless you are trying a Meditation which specifically explores shifting the focus from porn to your body and back).