

Physical warm-up is an important part of a forest walk, as it helps participants to arrive both physically and mentally in nature. The tension of arrival can be released from the muscles, helping to ease inner tension as well. Conscious movement and attention to breathing support presence and focus. Additionally, due to the uneven forest terrain, having warmed-up and relaxed muscles allows the body to react more effectively to unexpected situations, making the walk safer and more enjoyable.

EXPERIENCE: TUNING IN WITH MOVEMENT

It is recommended to include movement-based warm-up exercises as a separate block before starting a mindful silent walk. Alternatively, some movement elements can also be woven into the silent walk or other practices. Due to excessive phone use, tension often accumulates in the neck and shoulders; therefore, warm-up exercises should give special attention to these areas.

When giving instructions, consider participants' physical limitations and restrictive clothing. Before beginning, tell them that they are free to skip any movements that don't feel right. Encourage slow and careful movement, especially with unfamiliar motions.

Exercise descriptions are included in the appendix.



METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

- What role does physical warm-up play in preparing participants for focus and presence?
- How does this activity support the creation of a safe space – physically and psychologically?
- In what other settings or with what other target groups could this type of preparatory activity be particularly useful?



WARM-UP EXERCISES

Dynamic exercises, especially for children:

Running in place or in circles:



“Indian jumps” (jumping up with the right arm and left leg raised, then alternating with left arm and right leg)

Animal movements (e.g., rabbit, spider, crab, bear, lizard)

Face smoothing:

Gently stroke your face from the center outward toward the ears with your fingers or palms.

Hand shaking:

Shake your hands loosely to release tension in the fingers and palms.

Deep breathing:

Inhale deeply while raising your arms overhead, then exhale and bend your torso forward, letting your arms hang. Repeat with your own breathing rhythm.

Torso swinging:

Lean forward, cross your arms or hold your forearms, let your head hang and relax your shoulders. Swing your torso gently side to side and observe your knees from the outside.

Arm swings:

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, rotate your torso side to side, swinging your arms along. Turn your head in the same direction as your arms. Gradually raise your arms to shoulder height, activating the spinal muscles. Keep your hips and core facing forward.



Windmill rotations:

Raise your right arm and circle it vertically forward; do the same with the left arm in the opposite direction (right up while left down). Speed up gradually, bending knees slightly and engaging core muscles for balance. Repeat backward.

Hip circles: Stand in a small straddle and move your hips right

left, back, left, and forward in a circular motion. Do 2-3 rotations each direction.

Leg circles:

Lift one bent knee forward, rotate it outward and back, then place the foot down. Repeat 3 times each direction.

Ankle circles:

Lift your foot slightly off the ground and rotate the ankle in both directions.

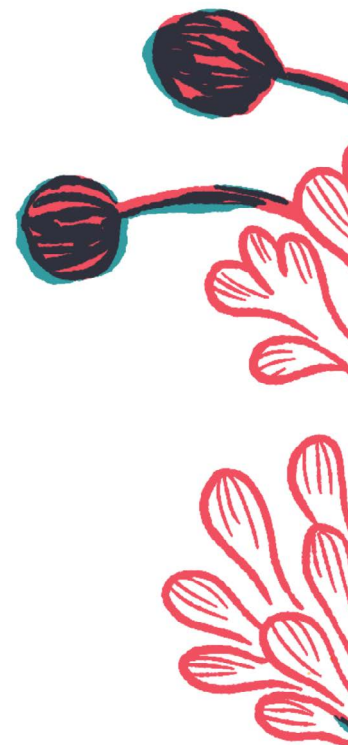
Knee circles:

Lift your knee, keep the thigh horizontal, and slowly rotate the lower leg and foot in small circles. Repeat 3 times in each direction, then switch legs.



Tree pose:

Stand tall and fix your gaze on a point about 1 meter in front of you. Lift your right leg, turn your knee outward, and rest your foot on the inner calf, knee, or thigh of the supporting leg. Alternatively, place your toes on the ground with the heel resting against your supporting leg. Choose what feels best. When balanced, slowly raise your arms overhead and bring your palms together. Breathe slowly. Bring your hands to your chest in prayer position, pause, then lower arms and legs. Repeat on the other side. ● ● ● ●



BREATHING EXERCISES

3-Second Breathing:

Inhale for a slow count of 3, then exhale for 3.

Full Yogic Breath:

(Abdominal + Chest + Clavicular breathing). Start by practicing each phase separately, then combine them.

Place your left hand horizontally at the bottom of the ribcage (palms inward) and your right hand on your belly. Breathe so that only your belly expands—activate the diaphragm beneath your left hand. Do several rounds.

Next, breathe only into the chest without moving the belly. After a few rounds, try clavicular breathing by lifting your shoulders 1-2

cm toward the ears as you inhale, then exhale fully.

After practicing each separately, combine all three phases: abdominal, chest, and clavicular inhalation, followed by a full exhalation. Repeat slowly 3 times.

Very Deep Breath:

Inhale as much air as you can, then exhale slowly, matching the length of the in- and out-breath.

Optional Favorite:

“MMM” humming to the forest (like when something tastes good): Place your hands in prayer position and hum the “M” sound together.

Invite participants to try walking barefoot – even briefly.



DURING THE WALK OR EXERCISES:

Breathing with Arms:

Raise arms as you inhale, lower them as you exhale, following your natural breathing rhythm.

Slow Motion Steps:

Take exaggerated slow steps: first place your heel gently, then roll the foot forward, finally placing the toes.

Spinning:

Extend your arms sideways and slowly rotate around your own axis, mindfully placing your feet.

With children:

Imitate animal movements.