



TUNE IN, TUNE OUT

WELLNESS TOOLKIT

Introduction

Our homes, communities, and cities are currently facing a pandemic, social turmoil, and political inaction, among other challenges. Unfortunately, as individuals we have been burdened with stress, fear, hurt, and loss. In order to maintain hope and sanity as we live right now, it is important to take care of ourselves so that we can help our communities thrive. Practicing self-care may be having a safe time outdoors, or taking some time to read, journal, or paint. Even if it is not being outdoors, perhaps having time to unplug from technology can be helpful. These activities were designed with the hope of bringing some peace during these hard times.

Remember, while COVID-19 is still present, we recommend taking precautions when venturing out of your homes. Check out [CDC's recommendations](#) about how to protect yourself and others during COVID-19, also available in [Spanish](#).

The underlined words in blue in this document are clickable and will bring you to a web page.





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Meditation

Introduction

This activity is an introduction to meditation. Meditation is commonly used to relieve stress, exercise mindfulness, and connect to oneself and nature. This activity works well to relax after work or school, as well as after an outdoor activity such as hiking or biking.

Materials

- ▶ Yoga mats or blanket to sit on (optional)
- ▶ Portable speaker or head/earphones
- ▶ Smartphone
- ▶ Soothing meditation sounds from the “[Tide: Sleep, focus, meditation](#)” app, or other Apps that provide soothing sounds. You could also create your own playlist or use natural sounds like “plant music” provided by our partners at the WorldBeat Center:
<https://noiseproject.org/plant-concert-series-moringa-tree>
- ▶ Online meditation guide and/or sounds from Spotify or YouTube
- ▶ A copy of the Meditation Guide (below)



MARILÚ LOPEZ-FRETT

Preparation

For meditation, you do not need to follow the guide provided below word for word. If you are meditating in a group, it is highly recommended that one person leads the meditation. If you are meditating alone, then you can practice rehearsing the script below. Also, if you find yourself coming up with something else, that is perfectly fine. If you prefer someone to guide you in meditation, then look for videos on YouTube, playlists on Spotify, etc. (You will not need an Internet connection if the videos or playlists are downloaded ahead of time.) You can also use meditation apps that offer free meditations.

Meditation Guide

1. To prepare for meditation, find a comfortable place to sit or lay down. If outdoors, it is recommended to find a shaded area.
2. Have everyone sit in a circle, including the person leading the meditation.
3. Lead meditation with your normal voice and make sure that everyone can hear you.
4. When everyone is seated on the ground, have everyone close their eyes.
5. Read aloud the **script on the next page**. This will guide people through regulating their breathing, becoming aware of their body, and focusing on what they hear and feel. In the script on the next page, the orange text in square brackets [like this] are notes to the leader and should not be read aloud.

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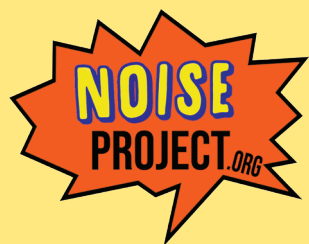
6. Following the meditation, you may choose to have a conversation about meditation with the follow-up questions below.
7. Once you have completed the meditation, make sure to leave the space tidy.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

- “Take a long breath in through your nose, and breathe out through your mouth.” [Repeat this 2 to 4 times with a pause after each time.]
- “Imagine your body where you rest or are seated. Notice how your arms and legs rest. Notice if there are parts of your body that feel discomfort or pain. Notice where you feel hurt, tight, or tense. Now notice if there are parts that feel comfortable and loose.”
- “Let’s continue to check our breathing. Think about the part of your body that is tight or that hurts. Relax as you breathe in and out.” [Pause] “Breathe in and out.”
- “Now tune in with your hearing. Take in the sounds around you.” [At this point, the leader should describe the sounds that can be heard, for example, birds chirping, wind whistling, white noise, cars honking, etc.]
- “Breathe in slowly, in and out.” [Repeat this 2 to 4 times with a pause after each time.]
- “Now bring your attention to your head ... your face ... your neck ... your shoulders ... your back ... your arms ... your hands. Notice your stomach ... your legs ... your knees ... your feet.”
- “Now notice the air around you. Notice the ground below you. Notice what your hands touch. Notice where your feet lay.” [Pause for a moment.]
- “When you are ready, take a deep breath in, and then slowly breathe out. Gently open your eyes. Slowly move your eyes. Look around you. [Pause to allow others to shift back to normal.]

Follow-Up Questions

- ▶ Overall, how was meditation for you?
- ▶ How did you feel before, during, and after the meditation?
- ▶ Did you find a time that you felt at ease? How about tense?
- ▶ How did your thoughts change before, during, and after meditation?
- ▶ How was the structure of meditation like for you?
- ▶ What would you change about meditation to fit in your own needs?



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Nature Walk

Introduction

Spending time outdoors is a great way to get rid of stress. It can be as simple as a walk around the neighborhood to contributing natural observations to [iNaturalist](#), [Celebrate Urban Birds](#), or [eBird](#). We also recommend that you [download Merlin](#), a free App from the Lab of Ornithology that helps you identify birds easily! If you want to engage with nature, here are five outdoor activities. They include mindful listening, nature journaling, photography, outdoor cleaning, and making iNaturalist observations.

Materials

Depending on the intensity and setting of your walk or hike, you may want to take the following:

- ▶ Close-toed shoes
- ▶ Backpack
- ▶ Water bottle
- ▶ Snacks
- ▶ Insect repellent
- ▶ Sunscreen
- ▶ Face mask
- ▶ Hand sanitizer
- ▶ Plastic gloves and bag for trash, etc
- ▶ First-aid kit

Preparation

1. **Choose your location:** A neighborhood or a local, state, or national park where you feel safe is best.
2. **Choose what time to go:** It is highly recommended that you first check park or trail hours and conditions.
3. **Have a backup plan:** Decide on what else to do if the location you chose is crowded or closed.
4. **Do some research about your location:** Look up which plants, animals, fungi, or rocks you might find.
5. **Dress appropriately:** Check the weather and dress accordingly. Bring sunscreen if you will be in the sun.
6. **Be respectful:** Do not bother, hover over, or move anything alive as you spend your time outdoors.
Do not leave trash behind carry it away with you.
7. **Pack water and healthy snacks:** Highly recommended foods are proteins, fruits, nuts, and veggies.
Be smart about COVID-19: Carry a face mask and hand sanitizer and stay 6 feet from other people. (See image below for more info.) Check out [CDC's recommendations](#) which are also available in [Spanish](#) about how to protect yourself and others during COVID-19.



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Other Opportunities to Engage Outdoors

In addition to taking a walk outdoors, here are some examples of other outdoor activities you can do.

MINDFUL LISTENING

As you walk along, be aware of the sounds or noises your ears capture. It would be best to keep quiet as many living species may go silent when it is loud. Notice what you hear along the way. What are the sounds and/or noises that you hear? How do you feel when you hear them? Are there sounds that you are surprised to hear? Consider if this is a place that you would return to as a sanctuary away from noise, a **noise refuge**. If you would like to reflect about your experience, you can take some time to journal, create art, or talk about it with others.

NATURE JOURNALING

You may want to use some time to journal during or after your time outdoors. Find a place where you can sit and spend 10 to 15 minutes. Use this time to write down whatever comes to your mind. It can be about what you observed as you walked around, what you heard, or how it made you feel. You can write as much or as little as you want. Feel free to make a list or create poetry. Whatever you decide, don't be afraid to write. This activity is about enjoying the process, not achieving perfection.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Outdoor photography is a great way to capture and record things you find enthralling, cool, interesting, or peaceful. You do not need a fancy camera! Use whatever device you have to photograph the things you see. Just be careful to not cause disturbance. If you would like to document any living species, check out the iNaturalist, Merlin, and Celebrate Urban Birds sections below.

iNATURALIST

iNaturalist is an online platform (desktop and app) that allows anyone to document living organisms around the world. Scientists, avid animal or plant watchers, students, among other people, post entries in the form of photographs of birds, mammals, fish, insects, amphibians, reptiles, plants, and fungi they find outdoors. The database has been helpful for many scientific, ecological, and conservation efforts. This may be a fun way to engage in citizen science wherever you go outdoors. You can go observe in your neighborhood, parks, lake, beach, or forest, and at any time of the year. Learn more about iNaturalist at www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started.

MERLIN

Merlin is a free app designed to be a birding coach for beginning and intermediate bird watchers. Merlin asks you three simple questions about a bird you are trying to identify and it will come up with a list of possible matches. You can also snap a photo of a bird, or pull one in from your camera roll, and Merlin Photo ID will offer a short list of possible matches. Photo ID works completely offline, so you can identify birds using photos you take when you are far from cell service. Finally, Merlin, offers you a handy guide to bird identification so you can explore and learn about the birds in your neighborhood. The app customizes your list to the species you are most likely to have seen at your location and time of year. It also lets you save your searches and submit them to eBird, a citizen science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin offers quick bird identification help for all levels of bird watchers to learn about the birds across the Americas. Check out Merlin: <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org>

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CELEBRATE URBAN BIRDS

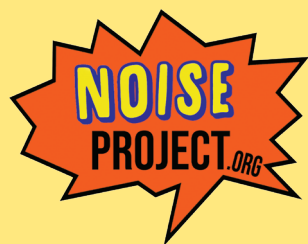
Celebrate Urban Birds (CUBs) is a bilingual citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Its focus is on working with diverse urban and rural audiences who do not already participate in ornithology or birding. The goal is to include minoritized voices, perspectives and experiences in scientific research through equitable and inclusive practices. CUBs is an easy, fun project for the entire family. No prior knowledge of birds is required, and your data will help scientists understand how birds use green spaces in urban areas. Educational materials and online trainings are offered in both English and Spanish.

Celebrate Urban Birds is easy to do. Here's how:

1. **Register for free** at CelebrateUrbanBirds.org and download your free educational kit with instructions, ID guides and other materials.
2. **Learn to identify 16 focal species.** You can get additional species lists online at CelebrateUrbanBirds.org/regional.
3. **Pick a place to watch birds** in an area that is 50 feet by 50 feet (the size of half a basketball court).
4. **Spend 10 minutes watching birds** in the selected area and report the presence or absence of the focal species.
5. **Repeat your bird observations three times** in the same area in one month.
6. **Enter data** online or send to the Cornell Lab by mail at: Celebrate Urban Birds, 159 Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca NY 14850.

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Although most of us go to natural spaces to get away from places in cities that may have a lot of trash or may be too crowded, it is possible that you may encounter some trash in nature as well. It is recommended that you carry a spare bag to pick up trash that you find, even though you may have not been the person who littered. By removing trash that you find, you will leave a cleaner space for living creatures and improve the overall health of the ecosystem. Some litter might even be recyclable.



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Self-Care Facial Mask

Introduction

Finding ways to relax at home can sometimes be a little challenging. Some of us might be forced to do online work or tasks all day and never get a chance to take time to lessen the stress in our lives. In order to be able to face everyday with grace, we must take care of ourselves physically and mentally. What better way to do so than pampering yourself with a facial mask! It is up to you whether you would like to make your own face mask or buy one*, but here are three easy recipes that you can use to make one at home.

Materials

- ▶ Relaxing sounds or music
- ▶ Facial mask
- ▶ Soft face towel
- ▶ Water to rinse your face

Instructions

1. In order to truly relax indoors, you should begin by playing some relaxing sounds. This can include anything from nature sounds (NBP playlist link or Tide app), a podcast, audio book, or some music you really enjoy. Or, use the soothing sounds of “plant music” provided by our partners at the WorldBeat Center: <https://noiseproject.org/plant-concert-series-moringa-tree/> While we are constantly listening to different noises and sounds throughout the day, it is important we also treat ourselves to some sounds we truly enjoy.
2. Use your purchased facial mask*, or make one following one of the recipes at right. **Please be aware of any allergies you have before using the face mask.**
3. Apply the mask to your face with your fingers or small, soft spatula.
4. Keep the mask on your face for 7 minutes, while you rest and focus on the sounds or music you have chosen to play.
5. After 7 minutes, rinse off the mask with lukewarm water.
6. Pat your face dry with a towel and avoid rubbing your skin.

DIY FACIAL MASK

Choose which recipe you would like to make, and then thoroughly mix all ingredients together in small mixing bowl until you have a creamy paste. Use right away.

Cocoa-Avocado-Honey Mask

- 1 half of a ripe avocado
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 Tablespoon cocoa powder

Honey-Egg Mask

- 1 egg white
- 1 Tablespoons honey

Banana-Honey-Orange Mask

- 1 half of a banana
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 Tablespoon orange juice

*If you would like to purchase skin care products for relaxation, please consider purchasing from a Black-owned business, such as [BLK + GRN](#), [Base Butter](#), [Hyper Skin](#), or [Oui the People](#).



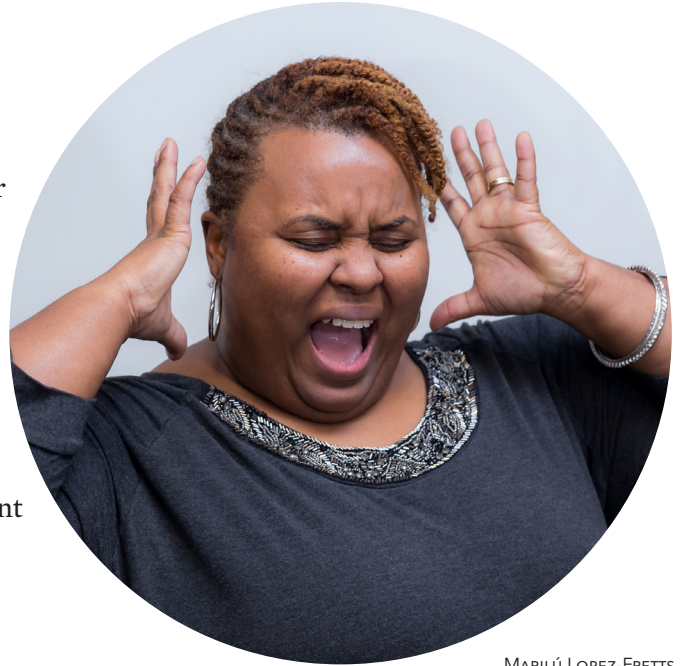
TUNE IN, TUNE OUT

WELLNESS TOOLKIT

All The Noise

Introduction

Our homes, our neighborhoods, our communities, and our world are facing a lot of noise right now: Noise from Zoom calls and houses that are more full than normal. Noise from young people speaking out and fighting back. Noise full of anger. Noise full of hate. Noise full of disbelief. Noise from communities coming together and keeping one another safe. Noise demanding change and fulfilling hope. In all this noise, it's important to reflect on all the noise we hear in our lives, but also take time to think about the noise and sounds we want to intentionally share with the world.



MARILÚ LOPEZ-FRETTS

Materials

- ▶ Blank paper or an index card
- ▶ Colored pencils or markers
- ▶ Old magazines or newspapers
- ▶ Glue

Instructions

- ▶ On one side of a piece of paper or card, write down all the noises you are hearing or have been experiencing. These could be messages you are hearing from the news, protest chants, the ping of someone joining a virtual call—whatever noises affect you right now.
- ▶ Find a way to process how you feel about these noises using one of these methods:
 - Draw pictures of this noise
 - Create a poem or a short song
 - Design a collage
 - Simply write a list of all the noises.
- ▶ On the other side of the piece of paper or card, write down all the noise or sounds you would like to be heard in the world. Some ideas include laughter, clapping as communities uplift each other, respectful conversations shared between various communities, etc.
- ▶ During this time of reflection, feel free to listen to these albums/playlists:
 - *Chilombo* by Jhene Aiko (this R&B album uses sound bowls)
 - [Plant sounds](#) from the WorldBeat Cultural Center
 - *Through the Looking Glass* by Midori Takada



TUNE IN, TUNE OUT

WELLNESS TOOLKIT

Listening with the Five Senses

Introduction

In a time filled with so much noise in our communities, on social media, and in our own minds, it is important to take the time to listen to and care for our bodies. Getting out into nature, or even finding a quiet place or moment in our homes, often provides the sanctuary that we need to get in touch with our 5 senses in a healing way.

Optional Materials

- ▶ Notebook and pen or pencil
- ▶ Paper and drawing utensils

Instructions

- ▶ If you feel safe to do so, find a quiet place in nature where you can sit or walk for 5 to 30 minutes. This might be your very own “Noise Refuge.”
- ▶ If you are able to, place your phone on Do Not Disturb during this time to eliminate any phone or text distractions.
- ▶ Begin by taking a few deep breaths, focusing on them, and clearing your mind from its noise of racing thoughts and tasks.
- ▶ As you follow these prompts, feel free to write or sketch what you experience.
 - **SIGHT:** Take notice of the things around you. What do you see? What colors surround you? Where do you see movement and where do you see stillness?
 - **TOUCH:** What do you feel in the weather, on your hands, or with your feet?
 - **SMELL:** Can you notice scents from different sources?
 - **TASTE:** What do you taste? What foods or tastes does this season make you crave?
 - **HEARING:** Which sounds surround you? Can you find various calming sources of sound?
- ▶ Take a few minutes to reflect on this experience. What did it feel like to slow your mind and body and focus on the present moment? What were the senses or sounds that brought you peace?



TUNE IN, TUNE OUT WELLNESS TOOLKIT

Other Recommended Activities

- ▶ Do you want to learn something new? [Skillshare](#) and [Shaw Academy](#) provide many online classes and workshops to learn new skills. Courses vary from photography, note taking, music, illustration, languages and more. The first two months for Skillshare and four months for Shaw Academy are free!
- ▶ Browse through [YouTube](#) to learn new skills for free.
- ▶ Interested in coding? Digital Defynd published an [article](#) suggesting 10 free online coding classes.
- ▶ Want to learn a language? [Duolingo](#) provides more than 20 languages to learn for free (desktop and app).
- ▶ Join a citizen science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology! These might include [Celebrate Urban Birds](#), [NestWatch](#); or [Project FeederWatch](#).
- ▶ Take a free [Bird Academy](#) Class! Visit: <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org> to find courses focused on birds, photography, nature journaling and more. Use the online coupon: ICBObirdcourses to take the course for free.

RESOURCES TO LEARN ABOUT, ENGAGE WITH, AND SUPPORT RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

Some resources about police brutality, social justice, and/or anti-racism

- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [American Civil Liberties Union](#)
- [The 100-Y Hoodie](#)
- [Mothers Against Police Brutality](#)
- [1619 Project](#)

Films and TV

- I Am Not Your Negro (2016)
- The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution (2015)
- When They See Us (2019)
- Dear White People (2017)
- Fruitvale Station (2013)
- 13th (2016)
- The Hate U Give (2018)
- If Beale Street Could Talk (2018)
- ▶ Check out where you can support Black-owned businesses in your town. In the Minnesota Twin Cities area, visit: <http://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/black-owned-businesses-in-the-twin-cities/>
 - Learn how to find and support Black-owned businesses online through apps and websites: <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/06/9849096/find-black-owned-businesses-online-apps>
 - [Shoppe Black](#)