A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE MACS

WEIGH LESS · AGE LESS

TOOL TWO
FIVE SENSE AWARENESS

Take Control of Your Nervous System.

Before You Get Out of Bed, Before You Check Your Phone, Before the World Gets Its Hands on You, Take Control of Your Life.

Declare You | Chapter Two: The Second Tool



Doing the "What do I see portion of the exercise

Susan is a client, and this is our second coaching session. I call all my coaching clients on Wednesday. Each session, I teach them the next tool. Each tool follows the order of what I do after I wake up, so I can look and feel better every day, in every way, as I age. This is the second tool I use to live younger, longer by weighing less and aging less.

“Doc, I’ve gotten Three-Six Breathing Mastered. What’s Next?”

Five Sense Awareness

Last week, I taught her the first thing I do every morning, before I even get out of bed.

Three-Six Breathing.

Breathe in for three seconds, out for six, repeated for a few peaceful minutes.

"So, Doc, I've been doing your breathing exercise every morning."

"Good. How's it going?"

"I like it. I feel calmer. But I have a question."

"Only one?"

"Don't push your luck."

I laughed.

"What's the question?"

"When do we start working on my menopause belly?"

"We already have, Susan."

"By breathing?"

"By learning how to manage your response to stress. If we don’t know how to manage stress,a nd we all have it on a daily basis, it becomes a bumpy ride, and I believe in making your journey as smooth as possible. Today I'm going to teach you the next tool."

"And that is?"

"Five Sense Awareness."

There was a long silence.

"Doc, I think you've lost your senses."

"Susan, tell me what you normally think about when you first wake up."

"Everything I have to do."

"Such as?"

"Work. My husband. The kids. Grandkids. What I'm going to eat. Whether I lost weight. Sometimes something that happened yesterday."

"And how do you feel?"

"Overwhelmed. And I haven't even gotten out of bed."

"That's exactly what I want to change.

"I explained that most people wake up and immediately begin living in two places.

"Yesterday.

"Tomorrow.

"They replay conversations they wish had gone differently. They worry about problems they haven't solved. They imagine difficulties that may never happen.

"Meanwhile, they overlook the only moment they can actually experience.

"Right now."

"How do I stop doing that?" Susan asked.

"By paying attention to your five senses."

"That's it?"

"That's the beginning."

"When I wake around four in the morning, Vicky is usually sleeping beside me.

"Benji, our little dog, has positioned himself close enough to make sure I don't forget he exists.

"The house is quiet.

"Before getting out of bed, I practice my Three-Six Breathing.

"Then I move to Five-Sense Awareness.

"I don't reach for my phone.

"I don't start planning the day's writing.

"I don't worry about what the bathroom scale might say.

"Instead, I begin paying attention to the world around me."

"Why?" Susan asked.

"Because I want to begin my day experiencing my life **in the present time, not regretting the past or fearing the past."**

"Susan, have you ever noticed what happens to your body when you're worried?"

"My shoulders get tight. Sometimes my heart races. And I can't stop thinking."

"That's your stress response at work.

When your brain perceives a threat, your body can respond by increasing alertness and releasing hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol.

"Those hormones are essential. They help us respond to challenges.

"But we don't need to spend every waking moment preparing for an emergency.

"And for women navigating perimenopause and menopause, changes in sleep, mood, and stress tolerance can make everyday challenges feel especially exhausting.

"Five-Sense Awareness is one way to practice bringing your attention back to the present moment.

"It doesn't directly balance estrogen or progesterone. It isn't a treatment for menopause.

"But mindfulness practices may help some people feel less stressed and become more aware of their emotional responses.

"And when you feel calmer, making thoughtful decisions about your health can become easier."

"Okay, Doc. I'm listening."

"Good. Close your eyes.

"Imagine you're waking up tomorrow morning.

"You've finished your Three-Six Breathing. Now you're going to spend a few moments asking yourself five questions.

1. “What do I hear?

"Listen."

"For what?"

"Whatever you can hear.

"Perhaps it's a bird outside.

"The sound of your partner breathing.

"The hum of the heating system.

"Or the quiet of a house that hasn't yet awakened.

"Listen for the most prominent sound.

"What do you hear?"

"A train's whistle."

"Perfect. Now listen for the most subtle. What do you hear?"

"I hear my dog breathing."

"Great. Now let's move to the next question.

2. “What do you feel touching you?

"Search for the most subtle thing touching your body?"

"I feel the hair on the back of my neck."

"And now the most prominent?"

"I feel my chair on my butt."

"Now let's ask the next question.

3. "What do you see?

"The back of my eyelids. My eyes are closed."

"What color do you see?

"Gray."

"Great, now gently open and close your eyes. What did you see?"

"The fan turning."

"You are doing this perfectly.

"Now, ask yourself the next question.

4. What do you taste?

"Again, begin with the most subtle.

"Nothing.

"Perhaps there's a lingering taste in your mouth.

"Yes, I kind of taste a hint of my toothpaste."

"Now let's ask the last question.

5. What do you smell?

"Take a comfortable breath and notice whether there's a scent in the air.

"Fresh sheets.

"Morning air.

"A familiar fragrance.

"Or perhaps nothing noticeable at all.

"Don't force it. Just pay attention."

"I smell my hair spray."

"What I do is also blow my breath into my nostrils.

I hear her blow.

"Again, maybe my toothpaste."

"Is that all five senses?" Susan asked.

"That's all five."

"And how long does this take?"

"About two minutes, once you're familiar with it."

"Two minutes?"

"Two minutes that belong entirely to you."

"Now, For The Most Important Part

"Susan, what do you think happens when you concentrate on what you can hear, see, touch, smell, and taste?"

"I'm not thinking about everything I have to do."

"Exactly."

"Your worries may not disappear.

"Your responsibilities will still be waiting.

"But you've practiced something valuable.

"You've learned that you can direct your attention instead of allowing every passing thought to direct you.

"That's one of the foundations of the discipline I teach.

"Not forcing yourself to do something unpleasant.

"Not punishing yourself for yesterday.

"But learning to make conscious decisions about how you want to live today.

"And those decisions influence how you eat, sleep, move, respond to stress, and care for yourself.

"Doc, do you still do this at 70? Do you still need it?"

"Every morning."

"Why?"

"Because I'm not finished living.

"Vicky and I have places we haven't visited.

"We have eight grandchildren whose lives we want to be part of for many years.

"And I have a personal goal. I want to dance at all eight of their weddings. Not sit in the corner watching everyone else have fun. Dance. That means I need to take care of my body. But it also means I need to take care of my mind. Because I don't want to become so preoccupied with getting older that I forget to enjoy being alive. And that's what Five-Sense Awareness reminds me to do. Experience the life you're living instead of spending every morning worrying about the life ahead. Because when you are in the present, there are no regrets from your past or fear of your future."

Your Seven-Day Challenge

"Tomorrow morning, before you check your phone or get out of bed, try this:

"First, practice your Three-Six Breathing for a minute or two.

"Then spend approximately two minutes noticing your five senses.

"Hearing.

"Touch.

"Sight.

"Taste.

"Smell.

"Do it for seven mornings. Don't worry about doing it perfectly. If your mind wanders, gently return your attention to one of your senses. And pay attention to how you feel afterward.

"Are you calmer?

"Less hurried?

"More aware of your surroundings?

"You may discover that the first few minutes of your day can become some of the most enjoyable.

Can I Ask You, The Reader, a Personal Question?

Have you noticed changes in your sleep, energy, mood, weight, or ability to manage stress as you've gotten older?

Perhaps menopause has made you feel not quite yourself anymore.

After 46 years in practice, Vicky and I now work with a small number of coaching clients, primarily through personal referrals.

"But if you're wondering whether changes in your hormones or daily habits might be contributing to how you feel, you're welcome to schedule a complimentary conversation with me.

We'll talk about your concerns, what you've already tried, and what you'd like to improve.

I'll help you put together a personalized lifestyle protocol at no cost, explain how to follow it, and guide you through your first week without a coaching fee. Since my roster is nearly always full, I leave two slots open for two readers of this newsletter.

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE CUSTOMIZED PROTOCOL

Sometimes all you need is a conversation with someone who has spent a lifetime helping people navigate to their ideal body.

One Small Favor Before You Go

Think of someone you care about.

Perhaps your sister.

Your best friend.

A coworker.

Someone who wakes up feeling overwhelmed, struggles with her weight, or wonders why she doesn't feel like herself anymore.

Would you forward this article to them?

Not because she or he needs another newsletter.

Because they might appreciate knowing that there are simple things she can do to begin feeling better.

And if a friend forwarded THE PAUSE to you, I'd love to welcome you as a subscriber.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE PAUSE — FREE

Every week, I'll share another story, another practical tool, and another lesson from the 46 years Vicky and I have spent helping people live healthier lives.

“One Last Thing, Doc.”

"What's that?"

"When you told me we were going to spend our second session talking about my five senses, I thought you were crazy."

"And now?"

"I still think you're crazy. But I'm going to try it."

I laughed.

"That's all I ask."

"Tomorrow morning, while Vicky sleeps and Benji has claimed his favorite spot beside me, I'll do exactly what I've asked you to do.

"Breathing.

"Listening.

"Feeling.

"Seeing.

"Tasting.

"Smelling.

"And appreciating the fact that I get another day to do what I love.

"Because I don't just want to add more years to my life.

"I want to add more life to my years.

"Until next week,"

Doc Mac

Weigh Less · Age Less

Live Younger, Longer.

Medical Disclaimer

The information in this article is intended for general education and wellness purposes and is not a substitute for individualized medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Mindfulness exercises are generally well tolerated, but responses vary. Individuals with significant cardiovascular or respiratory conditions, a history of fainting, or other medical concerns should consult their healthcare practitioner before beginning a new breathing practice. Never force your breathing or continue if you feel dizzy, short of breath, or uncomfortable. The studies discussed examine slow breathing techniques generally and do not establish that the specific Five Sense Awareness routine prevents disease, produces weight loss, or directly optimizes hormone levels.