

## Mindfulness – Flamingo Walking

The world we live in is full of distractions. I know that children are continually being told to 'pay attention', yet paying attention is not always easy. It is a skill that we need to learn and as we practice it becomes a crucial skill for life...

### Flamingo Walking

This practice is a good one to use if we are feeling unsettled. It can be calming for us to take our awareness to our feet, as far away from our chattering minds as possible. Try and keep your mind focussed on what your body is doing.

So, find a space where you will be able to move around a little bit. Sit down to listen for a minute, then I will direct your moving around... (pause)



'If you were flying in an aeroplane over Lake Nakuru in Kenya and you looked down, the whole lake would appear to be bright pink because of the millions of flamingos. Did you know that flamingos are actually born grey in colour and they turn pink because of all the beta-carotene in the shrimps that they eat? Carrots also contain beta-carotene, which is what makes them look orange. You've almost certainly eaten carrots, which means you've eaten beta-carotene, which means you already have something in common with a flamingo! Now let's see if you can try walking like a flamingo...'

- Stand tall like a magnificent flamingo

- Take your attention all the way from the top of your long flamingo neck, down the length of your flamingo body, down your long flamingo legs and into the soles of your flamingo feet. Notice what sensations you find in each part of your body as you move your attention down.
  - Close your eyes for a moment and notice how it feels to stand as still as you can. Notice all the tiny movements that your flamingo body and flamingo feet are making to hold you steady in one place.
- Notice how both your flamingo feet are making contact with the ground,
  - Now, allow all of your weight to go into your left flamingo leg and empty your right leg of any weight, then pick it up off the ground so you are standing on just one leg. For a moment, rest the way a flamingo likes to rest on just one leg.
- Then, slowly let your right foot travel through the air and place it down on the ground. As you do so, notice your left leg lifting off the ground, travelling through the air and bending like a flamingo.
  - As you place your left foot on the ground, notice your right leg lifting, travelling through the air and bending like a flamingo.
  - Keep walking slowly and gracefully like this, all the while, imagining the balance and the beauty of a flamingo.
  - You can practice this for a couple of minutes

## Reflection

What did you notice about the experience of walking?

I think you may have had a good experience, and this is what we call mindfulness.

Its ok if your mind wandered during the practice, but if you keep bringing your mind back to your flamingo footsteps then you have successfully completed your mindfulness practice. You can do this any time you are walking. You can do this any time that you feel restless or unsettled to calm your mind ready for the next thing that you need to do. In any case, see if you can do this activity every day for the next week...

Hope you enjoyed that as much as I did. Goodbye and be mindful....