The body focus experiment

A five-minute test of what attention does to sensation.

People with health worries often say, "But I really do feel it." They do. The question is whether paying attention changes what you feel. Try this.

1. Sit still. Close your eyes if you like.
2. Put all your attention on your left hand for two minutes. Search it for any sensation at all: warmth, pulsing, tingling, itching, heaviness.
3. Now open your eyes and count every blue object you can see for two minutes.
4. What happened to the sensations in your hand while you were counting?

What I noticed in my hand while I focused on it

What I noticed in my hand while I counted blue things

What this shows

Your hand did not change. What changed was where your attention was. Any part of the body will produce sensations if you search it, and those sensations fade into the background when attention moves on.

Which parts of my body do I scan or monitor most?

What might that be doing to what I feel there?

Try this

Next time you catch yourself scanning, name it ("I am scanning again") and move your attention to something outside your body.

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This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.