

Mindfulness: Resources for More Information

There are a lot of resources available, many of which are online. Here are some good places to start:

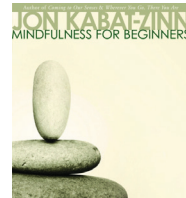
General Information

American Mindfulness Research Association
www.goamra.org

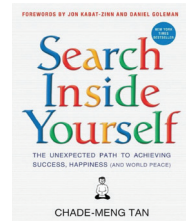
National Institutes of Health Mindfulness
<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/01/mindfulness-matters>

Mindful: Taking Time for What Matters
www.mindful.org

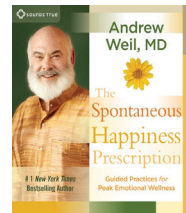
Books



Kabat-Zinn, Jon.
Mindfulness for Beginners.



Tan, Chade-Meng
Search Inside Yourself.



Weil, Andrew.
Spontaneous Happiness.

Mindful Apps



Insight Timer



Breathe



Calm



Happify



Headspace



Breethe

Mindfulness Classes



Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Center of New Jersey
www.mindfulnessnj.com



Mindfulness Meditation at the Jersey Shore
www.mindfulnessmeditationatjerseyshore.com/contact-us/



Advanced Wellness Consultants LLC
www.advancedwellnessllc.com

Creating Mindful Moments



Mindfulness Activities Have Many Benefits For Well-Being

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.” — Jon Kabat-Zinn

Simply put, mindfulness is the state of being present in the now, with full attention on whatever experience you are currently having, without reacting to previous or future events or experiences. This allows us to “be in the moment” without judgment based on experience, nor thoughts of what may happen in the future. Mindfulness is innate – we all have the capacity to be mindful, but it is something we need to develop and practice. In other words, anyone can be mindful, though it improves when we practice and cultivate the skill.

“What are some of the benefits of mindfulness activities for my well-being?”

Mindfulness is an effective and simple activity that helps decrease the negative effects of the stress response that we experience as part of our everyday lives. Research suggests that mindfulness-based interventions and practices have numerous therapeutic benefits. Mindfulness can reduce pain, anxiety and depression, and can improve sleep. Mindfulness activities can sharpen your attention and provide greater focus for the things that are important to you. Mindfulness is also a powerful way to build resiliency to stress. Mindful practices can increase empathy and compassion, positively impacting your connection to others and relationships.

Other benefits of mindfulness include an increased memory and learning capacity. Mindfulness can even be used to reduce symptoms linked to chronic medical conditions like cardiovascular disease and cancer. Mindfulness activities have been shown to be effective for relief of symptoms from cancer and side effects of cancer treatments.

“What are mindful activities that would be good for me?”

There are many different types of mindfulness activities and all are good for you. You may need to try several different activities to determine which ones work best for you. Which activities you choose is not as important as doing them. All of them work, if you actually do them. If you don't do them, they don't work. Find activities that resonate with you personally and make you feel good. Most mindfulness activities center around breathing that clears and calms the mind and slows your heart rate. Guided meditations lead you through a meditation and help you find a calm and peaceful state. Mindful yoga practice uses gentle stretching and movement to bring your awareness into the present moment, noticing and accepting how your body and mind feel without judgment or reaction.

Qi gong and tai chi are moving mindfulness activities that combine movement, breathing and meditation for relaxation and slowing down. Walking meditation is a simple practice for developing calm, connectedness, and awareness of the body. You can incorporate mindfulness into virtually anything you do during your day – cooking, eating, cleaning – simply by focusing on what it is you are doing as you are doing it. Focus on what your senses pick up. Smell the food, feel the ground beneath your feet, listen the sounds around you, take time to taste your food. The benefits are virtually immediate and if you stick with it they will last a lifetime!



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Meditation Practice

Mindfulness – People who practice mindful meditation daily experience a calmer mood, have better concentration, and report increased happiness.

Breath – Breathing naturally creates a physical relaxation response. Close your mouth and focus entirely on your breath as it enters and leaves your nose. When your mind wanders - and it will - gently bring your attention back to your breath, once you realize this has occurred. Just breathe naturally. Don't underestimate the power of your breath to help turn on your body's relaxation response, even under times of great stress and pressure. You can become mindful of it at any moment, no matter where you are or what you are doing. It's free, always accessible, and by just intentionally focusing on it for a few rounds, you are breaking the negative cycle of stress, tension, and intense emotions. The more you practice it, the more easily your body will respond, and you will feel less reactive and more in control.



Time – Sit in an upright and comfortable posture. Start with five minutes at first. Sometimes it is difficult to sit still quietly while only thinking about breathing, but stick with it. Don't give up! It is completely normal to get distracted. Over time, you'll get comfortable sitting longer. Practicing meditation is similar to going to the gym – at first you may only be able to lift light weights, but the more you do it, you will soon be able to lift heavier weights. Or, you may start with just five minutes on the treadmill, and if you keep at it, your time will increase. You can set your watch or phone alarm to go off at a certain hour to signal that it's time to take a mindful check-in and do a few rounds of deep breathing.

Eyes – Most people close their eyes when meditating to eliminate distractions and to focus on their breath.

Arms & Hands – Relax your arms and shoulders. You can rest your hands, palms up, on your legs, wherever they feel the most comfortable and relaxed.

Legs & Feet – Most people sit with their legs crossed in a comfortable way. If you are sitting in a chair, your feet should be flat on the floor.

Other things to consider when growing more mindful

■ Practice gratitude daily.

Practicing gratitude has a profound positive effect on our health. At dinnertime, or before you go to bed at night, pause and take a moment to reflect on what you are grateful for. Journaling your thoughts is even better because it reinforces the positive experiences.

■ Practice generosity daily.

Generosity actively addresses the needs of those around us, as we shape our environment into a healthier and happier one. Any note, a compliment, a smile is a gift of generosity that will have a positive effect on you and your world. Studies show it really is better than to give than to receive!

■ Practice non-judging daily.

Try to refrain from judging things that arise in our lives each day. It starts with awareness of the current moment and avoiding premature judgment and rejection from past experiences. Everyone has a story that you may not be aware of. Think about what could be happening in another person's life that you may not know about.

■ Practice trust daily.

Trust begins with an accepting, curious, and nonjudgmental attitude. Developing trust in yourself helps you to see the strength of your inner resources to face whatever challenge that you might encounter.

■ Practice patience daily.

Many of us spend much of our time rushing to get someplace else. We are compelled to get to a better moment, better time, when we believe it will all come together for us. Learning to be patient and embrace where we are right now, even in the midst of unplanned events, illustrates the possibilities to create peace and mindfulness for us in any moment. Anyone can be calm on a beautiful day; the goal is to learn to be calm in a storm.

■ Approach your day with a beginners mind.

Beginners mind is an attitude, it doesn't mean you don't know anything; it means you are ready and willing to learn. It means you are open-minded and will not bring what you think you know or have experienced in the past to the current experience that is about to unfold.

■ Practice acceptance daily.

Acceptance does not mean you have to like something, it means you are choosing to "go with the flow" of things you cannot change. Practicing acceptance allows us to be present and receive things to be exactly as they already are. Acceptance means realizing how things are and finding ways to be in union and harmony with them.

What to Expect

Even beginners in meditation report feeling more relaxed and less stressed. The immediate short term benefits will grow more profound as you practice. You can expect to be increasingly calmer and physically relaxed, with improved psychological balance and enhanced overall health and well-being.

Many people find that their mind will wander; this is perfectly normal. When this happens, be patient, keep trying, and success will follow. This is the reason it is called a meditation "practice". When learning to ride a bicycle, you may fall to one side or another, but eventually you learn to balance. As you practice your meditation, you may veer off course but in time you will train your mind.

After spending a few minutes meditating, notice your body, your thoughts, and your feelings. Has anything shifted? You may find a change in body

temperature, feelings of warmth or a light tingle in your limbs. Maybe there was a release of tension in your shoulders, or jaw, or a slowing down of the thoughts in your head, or a lightening up in the intensity of your feelings.

Meditation is beneficial for children, adolescents, and adults:

- Positive effects on physical health, mental health, and cognitive performance
- Increases happiness
- Decreases blood pressure, stress, anxiety, depression, inflammation, and many types of pain, including cancer-related pain
- Helps insomnia, IBS, and smoking cessation
- May decrease or even reverse changes that take place in the brain due to normal aging

