

Tell us what you think!



MINDFULNESS

Check out the evidence!

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS? ¹¹



Do you find yourself spending a lot of time thinking about the past or the future?



Mindfulness helps you pause and **become aware of the present moment** rather than being caught up in your thoughts.



Does your mind wander and automatically jump from one thing to the next?



Mindfulness helps you **focus your attention on purpose**. You can think of this like a spotlight where you choose to intentionally direct your attention.



Do you find yourself judging your behaviours or thoughts?



Mindfulness helps you to experience the present moment **with acceptance and without judgment**.

How does mindfulness work? ¹¹

Most mindfulness practices consist of one or both of these main components:

1 Paying attention to what we sense or experience

May include our breath, sensations in our body, our thoughts, or any experience or sensation in any moment (not past or future but now!)



2 On purpose → This means we focus our attention with intention.

3 With non-judgmental acceptance

This means we do not judge or criticize what we notice when we pay attention, rather, we accept whatever might come up for us.



The key is practice

Practicing mindfulness is like building an attention muscle. The more you practice mindfulness, the stronger your attention muscle gets.



Over time, you become more skilled at noticing when your mind starts to wander and bringing back your attention to the present moment.

Having a sense of non-judgment and non-reactivity ¹⁰

Mindfulness also gives us the ability to notice what's happening around us without judging it or immediately needing to change anything. It gives us a quick pause, between our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

For example, if I'm studying for an exam, and the more I study the more I start thinking...

Oh no, I'm going to fail this!



I start getting anxious and this thought triggers a stress response in me.

But if we are mindful, we can become aware of our thoughts, emotions, and the stress response that was triggered without instantly trying to change how we're feeling.

We can say...

Okay, this is just a thought.



This is just an emotion that will pass.

We can make a more thoughtful decision about what we want to do going forward.

The stress response model

This is where we can intervene with mindfulness!



SITUATION

E.g. There is an important exam tomorrow

EMOTIONS

E.g. anxiety, frustration, fear

THOUGHTS

"I'm going to fail."

"Everyone will do better than me."

STRESS



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS?

Research shows that there are lots of benefits that come from practicing mindfulness, such as:

Increase in ¹³

Attention



Concentration ¹



Performance ^{1, 12}



Happiness ^{6, 9}



Overall mood ⁹



Decrease in

Stress ^{2, 3}



Fatigue ⁷



Anxiety ^{5, 6}



Substance use ⁸



What does mindfulness look like? ⁴



Formal Mindfulness

The first thing that may come to mind is probably mindfulness meditation with guided audio recordings, using a set amount of time (5-10 minutes or more), that is done seated or lying down.



Informal Mindfulness

But, mindfulness can also be practiced in your day-to-day life. For example, while washing dishes we can pay attention to the feeling of the water and soap on your hands. This type of mindfulness only takes a few seconds and doesn't require any audios.

Ideally, the goal is to find ways to integrate a bit of both formal and informal mindfulness into our daily life!

How do I get started? Here are a few tips!



Build a routine!

Set aside a 10–15-minute period each day at the same time (e.g., right before bed or first thing in the morning, over your lunch break) for practice.



Setting yourself a regular schedule makes it easier to create a habit and to remember to practice.



Try a few different recordings

This can help you find out which ones you like!

We've provided some samples below but there are lots of free options online.



Finding a narrator whose voice you like will make the practice more enjoyable.



Place a sticky note

Maybe next to something you see every day, like on your bathroom mirror.



The key here is to put it beside something you see regularly but not too often (e.g., like your phone) or else you might stop noticing it completely.



Every time you see the sticky note, take a few seconds to be mindful as you are going about your day.



Remember!

It's normal that your mind wanders, this happens even to meditators with years of experience! The point of mindfulness is to notice your mind wandering and bring it back to the present moment, gently and with kindness!



What types of formal and informal mindfulness strategies can I try?

Here is a list of a few mindfulness strategies to get you started.

Watch out for the icons beside each strategy to see if it is a **formal** or **informal** mindfulness practice!



Sitting Meditation

This can be helpful before or after a stressful event.



[View the Sitting Meditation resource!](#)



5 Senses

This can be incorporated into our daily activities and only takes a few seconds!



[View guided audio for the 5 Senses!](#)



Breath awareness meditation

This can be helpful when we are feeling very stressed in the moment.



[View the Calming Breath resource!](#)



Body Scan Meditation

This practice will have you focus on different parts of your body and help build awareness.



[View the Body Scan resource!](#)



Thought Awareness

This strategy will help you notice your thoughts without engaging with them.



[View guided audio for Thought Meditation!](#)



Self-compassion Meditation

This can help when we feel highly self-critical.



[View the Self-Compassion Meditation resource!](#)



Riding the Wave

This strategy is particularly useful to deal with strong emotions.



[View the Riding the Wave resource!](#)