



THE SCIENCE OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment, being aware of our thoughts, feelings and sensations and of what is occurring right here and now. In other words, **mindfulness is about being purposeful in where you focus your attention** – a useful skill to help you stay focussed and calm in our fast-paced lives.

The practice of mindfulness originates from the Buddhist philosophy. In recent years, the practice of mindfulness continues to expand along with the evidence for the mental health benefits of mindfulness. Based on neuroscience research, people undertaking mindfulness training experience not only positive emotions, but changes in how the brain works and even its structure.

How to practice mindfulness

STEP ONE

Find a place that you can sit comfortably without being distracted. In your relaxed and comfortable space, start by bringing your attention to your body, the sensation you experience. Notice those sensations and thoughts without any judgement or the need to change or shift any feelings.

STEP TWO

Start to notice your breathing. The rise and fall of your chest. How the temperature of the air feels as it enters and exits your nostrils. This is a mindful breathing technique. It helps you regulate your attention by focusing on one thing – your breathing.

STEP THREE

Your mind will naturally wander, and this is normal. Make a commitment to maintain an attitude of curiosity about where your mind wanders each time it drifts away from your breath. Be curious about the different themes within your experience at any moment. Try to observe your experience rather than judging or interpreting it. Here, there is no goal other than just being in the present moment.

STEP FOUR

If any thoughts and feelings arise, take notice of them, without any judgement or trying to achieve an outcome. Simply bring your attention back to your breathing.

STEP FIVE

Continue your mindfulness breathing. Breathe in, breathe out and repeat for approximately 10 breaths.

How to integrate mindfulness

DURING ROUTINE ACTIVITY

Try bringing awareness to the daily activities you usually do on autopilot. For instance, pay more attention as you're taking a shower, walking mindfully from meeting rooms to the next. Zero in on the sight, sound, smell and feel of these activities.



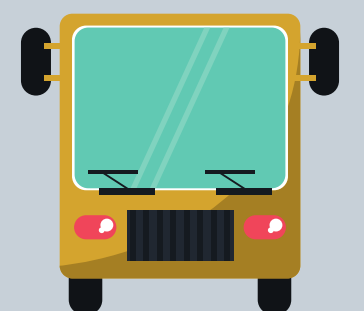
WHEN YOU WAKE UP OR AT THE END OF THE DAY

Depending on your routine, you might find it easier to practice right when you wake up or at the end of the day as part of your wind down routine. Try some mindfulness breathing to set the tone of your nervous system and increase the likelihood of mindful moments.



DURING YOUR LUNCH BREAK OR COMMUTE TO WORK

Download an App (e.g. Headspace or Calm) or play a guided meditation track on Spotify to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is a practice that trains your brain to be focussed - so practice with guidance to tap into the benefits.



Benefits of mindfulness include: experiencing a greater sense of emotional balance and wellbeing, improving your brain's functioning, greater ability to regulate emotions and an enhanced ability to relax and switch off from stressful events.

