

Adopting Mindfulness or Beginning a Mindfulness Meditation Practice

You have learned about the benefits of being mindful and building your capacity for this in daily life through mindfulness meditation, and wonder how you can adopt this into your life. Please see resources below of implementing practices into your life in whatever amount of time you have: few seconds, minutes, hours, or weeks. Here you will find information on simple practices, mobile apps, guided meditations online, online and local courses, retreats, books, audiobooks, and more!

Mindfulness Practices in 1 minute or Less

Washing your Hands

- Next time you are washing your hands, take a deep intentional breath.
- As you turn on the water, continue to focus on your breath and feel the sensation of the water and soap.
- Notice the temperature of the water, the sensation of one hand washing the other.
- If you want, think about how the encounter you are about to have (or just had) will positively impact you and the person with whom you are speaking. Think about this as a gift or opportunity
- Bring your awareness fully to the task, guiding your attention back if it wanders.

Mindful Observation

This exercise is simple but incredibly powerful. It is designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, something that is easily missed when we are rushing around in the car or hopping on and off trains on the way to work.

Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.

Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into a harmony for as long as your concentration allows. Look at it as if you are seeing it for the first time. Visually explore every aspect of its formation. Allow yourself to be consumed by its

presence. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its role and purpose in the natural world.

Opening the Door

This exercise is designed to cultivate a heightened awareness and appreciation of simple daily tasks and the results they achieve. It can be something other than opening the door, but we do this often in health care. Doing this exercise before each patient encounter can set a nice tone and help us leave any chaos outside the room behind.

At the very moment you touch the doorknob to open the door, stop for a moment and be mindful of where you are, how you feel in that moment and where the door will lead you. Similarly, the moment you open your computer to start work, take a moment to appreciate the hands that enable this process and the brain that facilitates your understanding of how to use the computer.

These touch point cues don't have to be physical ones. For example: each time you think a negative thought you might choose to take a moment to stop, label the thought as unhelpful and release the negativity. Or, perhaps each time you smell food, you take a moment to stop and appreciate how lucky you are to have good food to eat and share with your family and friends.

Choose a touch point that resonates with you today. Instead of going through your daily motions on autopilot, take occasional moments to stop and cultivate purposeful awareness of what you are doing and the blessings it brings your life.

The 4-7-8 (or Relaxing Breath) Exercise

Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning the exercise. Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
- Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Note that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of

4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned; it will pass.

Breath Counting

Sit in a comfortable position with the spine straight and head inclined slightly forward. Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then let the breath come naturally without trying to influence it. Ideally it will be quiet and slow, but depth and rhythm may vary.

- To begin the exercise, count "one" to yourself as you exhale.
- The next time you exhale, count "two," and so on up to "five."
- Then begin a new cycle, counting "one" on the next exhalation.

Never count higher than "five," and count only when you exhale. You will know your attention has wandered when you find yourself up to "eight," "12," even "19."

Try to do 10 minutes of this form of meditation. (Start with one minute)

Noticing the Breath – Mindful Breathing for One Minute

This exercise can be done standing up or sitting down, and pretty much anywhere at any time. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body.

Let go of your thoughts for a minute. Let go of things you have to do later today or pending projects that need your attention. Simply let yourself be still for one minute.

Purposefully watch your breath, focusing your senses on its pathway as it enters your body and fills you with life, and then watch it work its way up and out of your mouth as its energy dissipates into the world.

Mindfulness Mobile Apps with Guided Meditations

Headspace (10 days free, monthly subscription)

Guided meditation, great for on-the-go. Choose between 10-20 min meditation length

<https://www.headspace.com/>

Whil (\$15/month)

Guided meditations paired with leadership training

www.whil.com

Smiling Mind (Free)

Mindfulness programs for ages 7 - adulthood

<http://smilingmind.com.au/>

Buddhify (\$2.99)

80 short meditations for activities of daily life. Education and tracking tools

www.buddhify.com

Calm (basic is free with various purchase upgrades)

Background nature sights/sound. Daily learn to meditate followed by multiple meditations

www.calm.com

10% Happier: Mindfulness for Skeptics (\$19.99)

14 day program; Daily video information and audio guided meditations. Personal coach

<http://www.changecollective.com/10-percent-happier/>

Insight Timer (free) - more advanced

Community forums; personal stats and journal

<https://insighttimer.com>

The Mindfulness App (\$2.99)

Guided and silent meditations that last between 3-30 minutes

<http://www.mindapps.se/themindfulnessapp/>

Guided Meditations online

UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center

Free guided mindful meditations

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

UCSD Center for Mindfulness

Free downloadable guided meditations

<http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx>

Kristin Neff, PhD

Free downloadable self-compassion meditations

<http://self-compassion.org/category/exercises>

Local Classes

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) classes (8-week course)

Courses are generally designed around the methods by taught Jon Kabat-Zinn. Participants learn mind/body awareness techniques and gain tools that allow for more ease in dealing with daily stress, anxieties, physical ailments and emotional symptoms due to unresolved trauma and/or illness.

at Stanford:

- <https://stanfordhealthcare.org/events/scim-mindfulness-medication.html>

in Berkeley or San Francisco

- http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/news_events/event/mindfulness_based_stress_reduction_course_orientation
- <http://stresscarentraining.org/about-us/>
- <http://mindfulness4stressreduction.com/courses/>

in the South Bay, held at El Camino Hospital Locations

<http://www.mindfulnessprograms.com>

Compassion Cultivation Training at Stanford and other locations

An 8 week course divided into classes focused on different aspects of compassion with core principle of Mindfulness. It is derived from Tibetan Buddhism, but secular

- <http://ccare.stanford.edu/education/about-compassion-cultivation-training-cct/>

Online Classes

Mindful Awareness Practices (MAP) for Daily Living

UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center

6 weekly sessions start at specific dates but self-paced materials

“An excellent introduction to mindfulness. MAPs class lays the foundation for a daily meditation practice and provides insights into the art, science, and practice of mindfulness.”

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=112>

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Online, self guided 8-week MBSR class

<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/stress-reduction/mbsr-online/>

Retreats

Mindful Living Programs – 24 CME units Provided

Weekend retreat for individuals or couples

Focus on learning mindfulness in the context of healthcare provider needs for self-care and patient care. Held at Commonweal Retreat Center at Point Reyes near Bolinas

<http://www.mindfulnessprograms.com/>

Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Tremendous Variety of topics and teachers in Marin County

<http://www.spiritrock.org/>

Mindful Living Resources

Books

Wherever You Go, There You Are. Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2005. Wise and beautifully written book by the founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction explaining and exploring mindfulness with short 1-3 page chapters. Has optional accompanying meditation CDs.

Mindfulness for Beginner's. Jon Kabat-Zinn. An excellent book with audio recordings

Mindfulness. Mark Williams and Danny Penman, 2012 8 week plan for beginners based on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. Authors are both PhDs and focus on scientifically grounded techniques. Includes 10-20 min. audio meditations.

Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life. Thich Nhat Hanh, 1992 This little book contains brief instruction and practical suggestions which introduce the concepts and practice of mindfulness and its application in everyday modern life. It is secular, non-denominational and a perfect guide for the busy modern person to experience and appreciate the present.

The Mindful Child: How to Help Your Kid Manage Stress and Become Happier, Kinder, and More Compassionate. 2004. Susan Kaiser Greenland

Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting. 1998 by Myla Kabat-zinn and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Audio

Kelly McGonigal, *The Neuroscience of Change*, 2012 (Audiobook) Six lectures relating to the science behind mindfulness and compassion plus 12 guided self-reflection and meditation practices.

Jack Kornfield, *Guided Meditations for Difficult Times: A Lamp in the Darkness*, 2010 2 CD set for challenging times in life – teaching plus multiple guided meditations encouraging insight, perspective, compassion and forgiveness.

Audible Audiobooks has many resources: http://www.audible.com/cat/Self-Development/Meditation-Audiobooks/2226788011/ref=a_pd_Self-D_c2_3_bc

Video

Inspirational Talks: <http://www.mindful.org/7-meditation-talks-to-inspire-you>

Kristin Neff, PhD <http://self-compassion.org/videos/>

The Mindfulness Summit Videos featuring many world experts from the 2015 Summit: <http://themindfulnesssummit.com/about-us/>

Other Resources

The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE)

Free frequent eminent speaker events at Stanford

<http://ccare.stanford.edu/events-list/>

<http://ccare.stanford.edu/video/>

Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Online classes and streaming events

<https://www.spiritrock.org/online-events>

Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society

Official “home” of MBSR with a research center, annual conference and free downloadable webinars & videos (<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>)

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center
<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

American Mindfulness Research Association
Maintains a database of mindfulness research
<https://goamra.org>

Mindful eating:
<http://thecenterformindfuleating.org/>

Mindful Magazine. A terrific online (and print) resource.
<http://www.mindful.org/magazine/>

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