

Mindfulness

FACTSHEET

Mindfulness focuses a person's awareness on the present moment, helping to calmly acknowledge and accept feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. It uses meditation and self-awareness to enhance our ability to cope with challenging circumstances and psychological tensions.

The leading teacher of Mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn, describes it as "a simple Buddhist practice, which involves paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally". This practice can increase awareness, clarity and acceptance of our present-moment reality. It can also be helpful to develop a kinder and wiser understanding of challenging situations.

To learn more about Mindfulness go to www.bemindful.co.uk

Below you will find a relaxed breathing exercise and there are two Mindfulness exercises on the following pages. Go through one Mindfulness exercise and afterwards, reflect on the experience.

SQUARE BREATHING

This is a simple and easy to remember exercise to control your breathing.

It is good to practice your breathing exercises regularly, try to practice for 3-5 minutes, 2-3 times a day.

Breathe in
for
four seconds*

Hold your breath
for
four seconds

Hold your breath
for
four seconds

Exhale
for
four seconds

*Try to breathe in with your belly, not your chest.



MINDFULNESS EXERCISE 1: A GAME OF FIVES

Close your eyes or focus your attention on one spot. Practice relaxed breathing.

Think about your day so far. All you have to do is notice three things in your day that usually go unnoticed and unappreciated. These could be things you hear, smell, feel or see. For example, you might see the walls of your front room, hear the birds in the tree outside in the morning, feel your clothes on your skin as you walk to work, or smell the flowers in the park, but are you truly aware of these things and the connections they have with the world?

When you have thought of three, think of two more.

When thinking of these five things, ask

- Are you aware of how these things really benefit your life and the lives of others?
- Do you really know what these look and sound like?
- Have you ever noticed their finer, more intricate details?
- Have you thought about what life might be without these things?
- Have you thought about how amazing these things are?

Let your creative mind explore the wonder, impact and possibilities these usually unnoticed things have on your life. Allow yourself to fall awake into the world and fully experience the environment.

By becoming mindful of who we are, where we are, what we are doing and the purpose, if any at all, and how everything else in our environment interacts with our being, we cultivate a truer awareness of being.

This helps us learn to identify and reduce stress and anxiety and difficult, painful and perhaps frightening thoughts, feelings and sensations.



MINDFULNESS EXERCISE 2: THE MAGIC MOMENT TECHNIQUE ⁽¹⁾

This exercise is a very simple technique with its foundations in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and hypnosis, that with practice, can become an effective tool in stressful times. It may help you if you experience social anxiety or anxiety in certain situations.

- Think of one of the happiness moments that you can remember, this can be recent or from earlier childhood. A specific moment in time. Think of everything about that moment. The smell, the weather, the emotions and try to ignite every sense to relate to that moment.
- Bring yourself to this memory and then immerse yourself in it. Begin to take 10 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, while constantly thinking of that memory. While doing this squeeze tightly your thumb and forefinger together on both hands. Take your deep breaths, think of this happy thought, and squeeze the thumb and forefinger together.
- Every night as you lay in bed over the next 3-4 weeks, as your eyes are closed and you begin to slow down, bring that happy memory back into your mind. Every sense, every emotion. Begin to take 10 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, while constantly thinking of that memory. Again while doing this squeeze tightly your thumb and forefinger together on both hands. Take your deep breaths, think of this happy thought, and squeeze the thumb and forefinger together
- Practise this every night for 3-4 weeks. Mental well-being takes practice.

The next time you find yourself in a stressful experience e.g. feeling claustrophobic in a busy area, having worrying thoughts, practice this exercise. Just as you are about to face the situation, squeeze your thumb and forefinger together on both hands, and this trigger will subconsciously introduce that happy magic moment and it will help you remain relaxed and calm.⁽¹⁾

REFERENCE

(1) www.alustforlife.com