

## Mindfulness for Everyday Living

“When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there?” – Thích Nhất Hạnh

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If you have a medical condition, coordinate mindfulness practices with your doctor.

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### Benefits of Mindfulness

Results: slower breathing, lower blood pressure, feeling of calm and well-being

Relieve: anxiety, depression, distress, fatigue, pain, stress, tension

Improve: mood by calming emotions, sleep, quality of life, and positive outcomes

### Forms of Mindfulness

Affirmations

Awaken the senses

Body scan

Breathing

Concentrating on a thought, mantra, activity, or image

Contemplation

Focusing on breath

Guided imagery (focus on pleasant images to replace unpleasant ones)

Making the familiar new again

Martial arts: e.g. tai chi, karate, judo, aikido, nia

Mindful eating

Paying attention

Progressive relaxation (tighten and relax muscle groups)

Resting quietly and observing breathing and thoughts

Self-hypnosis (suggestion)

Sitting

Transcendental Meditation

Visualizing

Walking

Yoga

Zen meditation

## Kinds of Mindfulness Practices

- Formal: Regularly practiced mindfulness (e.g., meditating each morning for 10 minutes)
- Informal: Mindfulness practiced at irregular times throughout the day (e.g., when waiting in the grocery line or at a stop sign)

## Mindfulness Exercises

### *On-the-spot mindfulness meditations*

Alternate nose breathing (Use this one when put on hold on the phone, at a stop light, or other moments when irritation sets in)

- Close one nostril by holding a finger on the outside of the nose
- Breathe in and out slowly, focusing on the breath
- Close the other nostril
- Breathe in and out slowly, focusing on the breath
- Repeat

At the beginning of your meditation:

- Be in a quiet, safe place
- Close your eyes
- Relax your body
- Breathe in deeply
- Hold the breath briefly
- Breathe out slowly and fully
- Repeat three times

At the end of your meditation:

- Open your eyes and be present in the environment

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*For all of the following, go into a meditative state to begin and come out of a meditative state when done.*

Meditation for “Witness Consciousness”

- Breathe to go into a meditative state (feel frontal lobe and insular cortex engage)
- Move consciousness to top of head and observe yourself
- Move consciousness on top of that and observe self observing self

Meditation to dissipate emotion

- Imagine putting one tablespoon of salt in a glass of water and how it would taste
- Pour it into a pitcher of water
- Pour it into a lake
- Pour it into the ocean

Shapiro (2009)

### Meditation to experience “No Self”: Explore your own self through time

13 years old

21 years old

A year ago

Shapiro (2009)

### Mindfulness meditations for kids

1. Deep breathing: sit in a quiet place, inhale slowly through your nose deep into lungs, hold 5 seconds, release slowly.
2. Muscle relaxation: contract group of muscles tightly. Hold for 5 seconds. Release. Repeat 5 times.
3. Visualization: close your eyes, picture a peaceful place or event and sounds that makes your heart happy, imagine stress flowing away from body; or visualize competitive sport activity

Shapiro (2009)

### Meditation to experience “Essential Nature”

See yourself as a pure and noble essence, virtuous, pure, and deeply lovable

Shapiro (2009)

### Meditation for Anxiety or PTSD

Recall an unpleasant memory that causes anxiety

Notice your physical feelings

Stay with the physical feelings until they dissipate or until your concentration ends

Come out of the meditative state slowly and carefully

### Decision-Making Meditation

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Think of one option

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Think of another option

Feel heart and remember the feeling

Come out of the meditative state and assess your feelings in order to make the decision

### Six Focusing Movements: Meditation for Self-Healing

Choose a time and place that will be quiet for a prolonged period of time

Go into a deep meditative state

Clearing a space: Ask yourself, “How do I feel?”

Felt sense of the problem: Ask yourself, “Which problem is the worst?”

Finding a handle (one or more words describing the pain):

Name the problem (e.g., sore, aching)

Resonating handle and felt sense: Ask, “Is the handle right?”

Adjust the handle as needed

Asking: Ask the problem

Receiving: Listen to the response

Come out of the meditative state

Gendlin, E. T. (1981). *Focusing*. New York: Bantam Books

Self-Soothing (*When an argument becomes heated, John Gottman recommends using this meditation to deal with flooding--a feeling of being completely overwhelmed.*)

End the conversation (instead of going until someone explodes at their partner).

Focus on calming the body throughout this meditation.

Sit comfortably in a chair or lie on your back on the floor.

Close your eyes.

Focus on taking deep, regular breaths.

Relax your muscles.

One tense muscle group at a time (e.g. face, shoulders, arms, back), tightly squeeze. Hold for two seconds and release.

Allow the tension to flow out of the muscle group and let it feel heavy by imagining that it is weighted down.

Get the muscle group to feel warm. (Do this by imagining a relaxing place that you enjoy and focus on that image for about 30 seconds.)

Repeat muscle groups until calmed.

Gottman, J. (2015)

Energy Clearing Meditation (use at the end of the day)

Before bed, go into a deep meditative state

Ask your higher power to help you

Starting with your first human contact, identify the feelings in your body that come up when you think of that person

Release the feelings

Move to the next contact and repeat until all contacts have been cleared

Finally, ask all dissonant energies in your home to leave

Visualize replacing them with light and love

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

Meditations to Induce Sleep

While in bed, go into a meditative state

Focus on the tips of your toes and relax them

Focus on the balls of the feet and relax them

Focus on the bottom of the arches of the feet and relax them

Move up the body one portion at a time until sleep begins

When ready to sleep, focus solely on the breath. When the mind wanders, bring your thoughts back to focus on the breath.

Meditation to Induce Sleep (2)

Count slowly when breathing out

Each time you breathe out, add one more count

Meditation for Gratitude

Before sleeping, think of three things you're grateful for that happened that day

Think of one things you're looking forward to tomorrow

## **Mindful Thought Processes to Use throughout the Day**

Identifying dissonance between values and actions

Feel stressor

Question in mind—is this stress caused by an action that conflicts with personal values?

If so, identify the personal value

Think of ways to change the action to more closely fit personal values

Or, accept and release

Finding passion

Throughout the day, identify activities that fatigue and those that energize

Activities that produce energy are your passions

Suspending time (Useful while on vacation)

Prepare the mind

Identify a window of time, such as the time that you are going on a vacation

Awaken to the desire to prolong the period as long as possible

Know that the key is to be totally in the moment without regard for the past nor future

During the selected time period

Relax the body

Be aware of the present by floating in the stimuli coming in through the senses

If the suspension of time is uncomfortable, think a little bit more about the future or past to regulate the perception of time to a comfortable level

## **Mindfulness for Protection**

Build an electrical shield

Go into a meditate state

Feel the aura surrounding your body and personal space

Visualize a flame or electricity at the outer edge of your aura

The Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-18

Go into a meditative or prayerful state. Then put on the Armor of God:

Buckle the belt of truth around your waist

Put the breastplate of righteousness in place

Fit your feet with the readiness from the gospel of peace

Take up the shield of faith

Place the helmet of salvation on your head

Hold the sword of Spirit (the Word of God)

Be alert and pray

Silent Unity

Call or submit online a prayer to Silent Unity.

Tel: 816-969-2000

Online: <https://www.unity.org/prayer/request-prayer>

## Clearing

### Epsom salts and rubbing alcohol

Place Epsom salts in a pan that can sustain high heat.

Pour enough rubbing alcohol over the salts to cover

Set somewhere safe, because the flames can go high and the pot will become hot.

Light the alcohol and let it burn out

When cool, add more salts and alcohol to clear another space

### Saging (for a space or a person or other sentient being)

Cover fire alarms with plastic and masking tape

Light the end of a sage stick or a pile of sage in a safe container that can handle heat and catch the ashes

Blow on the sage from time to time to keep it smoking

Move the sage up, down, and around the person and space

## Selected Resources

American Psychological Association website: <http://www.apa.org/>

Brainfacts.org

Gottman, J. (2015). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country's foremost relationship expert*. New York, NY: Harmony.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2012). *Mindfulness for beginners: Reclaiming the present moment and your life*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

*Meditation and brain changes: Recent research and new applications*. (June 25, 2012) Jon Lief. (Retrieved Nov. 13, 2013, from <http://jonlieffmd.com/blog/meditation-and-brain-changes-recent-research-and-new-applications>)

MedlinePlus.gov

Nhật Hạnh, Thích. (1987). *The miracle of mindfulness: An introduction to the practice of meditation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

PubMed.gov

*Relaxation techniques for health: An introduction*. (Retrieved Jan. 19, 2015, from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>)

Shapiro, S.L., & Carlson, L. E. (2009). *The art and science of mindfulness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Society of Neuroscience website: <http://www.sfn.org/>

## Free Mindfulness Apps

Stop, Breathe, & Think

Mindfulness training app

Headspace

Insight Timer

Relax Melodies

Meditation Timer Pro

Take a Break

Calm

Smiling Mind

Mind Body Connect

Simply Being: guided meditations

Get Some Headspace: guided meditations with capability to record own progress

Meditate: pre-recorded sessions with the sound of Tibetan singing bowls

Mindfulness Meditation: an 8-week program to learn meditation

Breathe2Relax: guided breathing sessions

Omvana: personally customize meditations for your unique style

Relax Melodies: gentle music to relax

Mindbody Connect: find meditation centers