

Mindfulness Manual

Mindfulness is: *“Paying attention to something in a particular way on purpose, non-judgmentally.”*

-John Kabat-Zinn

“It’s not really about sitting in the full lotus, like pretending you’re a statue in a British museum. It’s about living your life as if it really mattered, moment by moment by moment by moment.”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mindfulness:

- Awareness of what is happening as it is happening, both inside and out
- Make a decision to train your mind to check in as you are
- Autopilot is useful for some things (like driving a manual needs to be automatic)
- Autopilot is not useful if you need to attend (driving and attending to changes in the road or traffic)

John Kabat-Zinn is a well-known mindfulness expert and shared some other insights.

- “99% of what goes on in my head is none of my business”
- Work on falling awake (not falling asleep)
- Nurture your awareness, rather than forcing it
- Don’t ask if there is life after death but if there is life during life

How Mindfulness Works:

- Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the brain to change
- Mindfulness changes the functioning and structure of the brain as demonstrated in EEG and brain studies
- The attentional skills that you practice become a well-developed neural pathway, allowing you to refocus more easily over time
 - If someone experiences depressive, negative feelings, that is the neural pathway that gets developed

- If someone mentally rehearses times they felt happy or had a good performance, that is the pathway that develops
- Studies that monitor brain activity of athletes show that when athletes do imagery, different areas of the brain light up
- The brain makes new neurons until we die and we are always learning
- Actions get easier as you do them more. They become routine
- John Kabat Zinn's program of meditation has a positive impact on the mind, body and behavior
- This has been demonstrated repeatedly in research studies

The Three Pillars of Mindfulness

Paying attention to the present moment, without judgement.

What are the Benefits of Mindfulness?

Your mind is like any other part of your being, you can benefit from understanding how it works and you can train it to work better. According to a meta-analysis done by Baer (2003), benefits include:

1. **Stability of mind** – maintaining your mind in an alert, clear space instead of being distracted by extremes fuelled by judgements of yourself, others or your experience.
2. **Flexibility of mind** – the ability to shift your mind to whatever object you choose, rather than having it bounce haphazardly between a number of issues.
3. **Self-Awareness** – being aware of the contents of your mind and understanding the typical patterns of your mind.
4. **Acting** rather than **reacting** – becoming less reactive, allowing space to be intentional.
5. **Exposure** – Simply allowing ourselves to feel emotions instead of fighting or avoiding them makes them less painful over time.
6. **Acceptance** – When we fight things we cannot change, it causes us a lot of pain and suffering. When we work on accepting them the pain feels more tolerable and goes away faster. Plus, fighting it doesn't change anything anyway.

Principles of Mindfulness:

1. Set an intention. This is what you want to pay attention to.
2. Cultivate self-awareness. Know where you are, know yourself, and then you can change it. Notice what happens as you change.
3. Regulate attention. Develop an awareness of awareness.
4. Strengthen self-regulation. Want pre-frontal cortex control
5. Practice kindness and compassion for self and others. Disengage from your inner critic.

Formal vs. Informal Practice

Mindfulness is very simple, but can be difficult to learn, therefore it requires practice! In this group we will be focusing on informal practice and we always encourage experimenting with formal practice.

Informal Mindful Practices

- More of a mindset, a philosophy of living each daily more fully
- Any effort to bring mindful awareness to your daily activities and inner experiences (like eating, relating with others, going for a walk, etc.)
- Any effort to spend more time in the now and less time worrying or ruminating

Formal Mindful Practices

- Sitting Meditation
- Walking Meditation
- Yoga / Movement / Qi Gong

Homework

Step out of Automatic Pilot

Choose one activity each day that you often do in autopilot. Activities such as brushing your teeth, eating a meal, attending lectures, showering, preparing for bed, walking in the park are all suitable.

When the time comes for that activity, do it in a fully mindful frame of mind. Pay attention to the activity itself, what is happening right in the moment. As a general aim, stick to the sensations present at the time, touch, sight, sound, taste, smell. You may also note what emotions, thoughts and bodily feelings you have.

If the activity is likely to be longer than a few minutes such as eating a meal or walking in the park then practice the first two minutes mindfully.

Keep a journal (what you did and what you noticed) of your mindfulness practice this week:

Wednesday-

Thursday-

Friday-

Saturday-

Sunday-

Monday-

Tuesday-

Mindful Awareness or Auto Pilot?

Mindful Awareness

I can experience my emotions without having to act on them.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I pay attention to what is happening in the moment.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I am compassionate toward others.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I notice when and where I hold tension in my body.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I am compassionate with myself.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I give people my full attention.	Never	Sometimes	Always
When my mood changes, I can point out what changed in my thinking.	Never	Sometimes	Always
When I walk outside, I am aware of the smells and how the wind or sunshine feels on my face.	Never	Sometimes	Always

Auto Awareness

I run on “autopilot”, without really paying attention to what I am doing.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I think about the past.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I have a hard time naming my emotions.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I rush to get things done and on to the next thing.	Never	Sometimes	Always
Sometimes I don’t realize how I feel until much later.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I worry about what might happen in the future.	Never	Sometimes	Always
I try to control my feelings.	Never	Sometimes	Always

There are things that I try not to think about.

Never

Sometimes

Always

Questions for Reflection

1. Where have you marked “Always” or “Never”? What does this tell you about your relationship to your experience?
2. Are there any surprises in your answers, anything you are just noticing about yourself?
3. Looking over your answers, is there some part of your experience that you would like to bring more mindful awareness to?

General Mindful Meditation Scripts

Meditation Introduction

- Choose a comfortable position
- Keep eyes open
- Be aware of the space around you
- Take breathe, notice the silence around you
- Close eyes
- Be aware of breath in and out
- Be aware of sounds
- Be aware of physical sensations, contact of body with chair, hands arms etc
- If mind wanders, bring attention back to body
- Notice how your body feels, still restless, general sensations
- Do body scan from head down to toes
- Identify areas that are comfortable or not
- Notice your mood
- Attend to the rhythm of your breath, watching it, following it
- Count: 1 inhale, 2 exhale, 3 inhale, 4 exhale....up to 10
- Start again
- If your mind wanders, bring it back
- Now let go of your focus and let your mind wander wherever it wants to go
- Come back to the sensation of your body, physical sensation
- Let your body unwind

Meditation: Balance focus and relaxation

- Breath in and out, attending to your breathing
- Feel your chest expand, lungs fill, breath out, let your body soften
- Close eyes
- Notice the weight of your body, contact against where you are sitting, feet on the floor, arms/hands resting
- Notice the sounds around you, familiar
- If your mind wanders bring it back
- Check in with your body, the general sensations your feel
- Scan your body, notice areas of comfort or discomfort
- If mind wanders bring it back
- Notice your mood, emotions

- Settle your attention on the rise and fall of your breath
- Feel it, don't change it
- Notice the rhythm, quality of your breath
- Count 1-10 (inhale on odd numbers, exhale on even numbers)
- Let go of focus on breath, let mind go
- Bring attention back
- Notice sounds, smells, physical sensations

Mindfulness for Anxiety

- Anxiety often occurs because our minds are in the past or the future.
- With mindfulness we calm the arousal, relax the mind and move to the present.

1. Relaxation Breath

Inhale to the count of 4 (or any count that is comfortable to you)

Exhale to the count of 4

Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly to see which hand moves (you want the hand on your belly to move)

Start the count again and do 4 sets of inhale/exhale

2. Relaxation Breath + Imagery

Do relaxation breathing as outlined in #1

Use imagery with each breath

As you inhale, picture energy, health, peace

As you exhale, picture letting go of stress (pushing it out with your breath)

3. Awareness of Breath

Do relaxation breathing as outlined in #1

Become aware of every nuance of your breath

Is it warm or cold?

What do you smell each time you breathe?

What do you feel in your body each time you breathe? Pay attention to how your body move with each breath

Appreciate your breath

Breathe the good in, exhale the bad out

If your mind wanders, that's ok, just bring it back

4. Present Moment Awareness

Life is a series of moments

You lose this one if you are thinking about another

If a thought comes in say to yourself “not now” or “maybe later” or “let it go”

Repeat these as distracting thoughts come to mind

5. Space Between Meditation

This is a focus meditation where you will notice the space between things

Start with deep breaths

Then notice the space between your eyes, visualize it, hear it

Put your hands together

Focus on your thumbs, then focus on the space between your thumbs

Now focus on the space in your head

Can you imagine the space between your nose and your mouth

Can you imagine the space between your ears

Can you imagine the space between your chin and chest

Can you imagine the space between your shoulders

Can you imagine the space between your chest and navel

Can you imagine the space between your knees

Can you imagine the space between your ankles

Can you imagine the space between your toes

Can you imagine the space between your head and feet

6. Mindfulness of Anxious Thoughts

Begin with mindful breathing

Notice the thoughts that come to mind

If you don't like a thought, observe it, accept it, let it go

OR, pay attention to the thought

Develop awareness of the thought

Decide to change it

Meditations To Disengage

1. Lazy River

Start with meditation breathing

Imagine a lazy river, such as the ones at a water park where the rafts drift by

Imagine the rafts going by; these rafts are all thoughts and you are to watch them go by

Accept all of them that go by for what they are

Then eventually choose a raft (thought) you want to get in

Get in the raft (thought) and stay with it through the river to see where it takes you

2. Conveyer Belt

Similar to lazy river but using the imager of a conveyer belt with thoughts moving by
Eventually choose one and get on the conveyer belt with it

3. Traffic

Similar to lazy river but imagine the cars and traffic going by as your thoughts
You passively observe and accept them
Eventually choose a car (thought) to get in

Meditations To Engage

1. Comparative Thinking

Notice your thoughts, good or bad
Be aware of each one
Find better thoughts and replace

2. Changing the Channel

Watch the worry channel
Accept those worries
Then switch channels to something more positive and uplifting

3. Outer to Inner

Start with awareness of outer self, how body feels
Move to awareness of breath, how body responds to breath
Move to inner thoughts, what is going through your mind
Move to inner emotions, what are you feeling

Meditation For Distress Tolerance

1. Ice Cube Experience

Goal is to sit with emotion without trying to change it
Hold an ice cube in your hand as long as you can
Pay attention to the feelings, possibly discomfort
The longer you do it the less uncomfortable it gets

Mindfulness of Tasks

1. Every Day Tasks

Pay attention to everyday tasks and the steps you take to go through them; appreciate each one

Washing dishes, brushing your teeth, eating, driving

2. Mindful Eating

Get a piece of candy or raisin

Let it slowly dissolve in your mouth

Pay attention to the taste and sensations in your mouth

Take your time!

3. Mindful Walking

Stand up and feel your body

Pay attention to your feet

Take a step very slowly

Notice every part of the movement as your heel leaves the ground, then the ball of your foot and finally your toes

Feel your leg as it moves forward and your foot comes off the ground

Feel your foot as you place it on the ground again, one step ahead

Repeat this for several steps

4. Body Scan

Pay attention to each part of your body, one at a time

Start with your feet and notice how your feet feel

Move to your calves, knees, quads and hips

Then move to your stomach and lower back, chest and upper back

Then shoulders, neck and head

Then upper arms, forearms, and fingers

Take your time at each point along the way

5. Sense of Smell

Be aware of the smells in your environment

Examples: fresh cut grass, orange, smoke from a camp fire, chlorine, ocean, nail polish, perfume, coffee, bacon

Mindfulness for Reducing Depression

1. Lazy River/Conveyer Belt/Traffic Highway

Allow depressive thoughts to float by

You can get on with one and explore it

Or you can choose to get on a positive thought to replace it

2. Vanishing Thoughts

Take a breath

It is normal that thoughts come and go

Picture a blank white board with thoughts on the board in red letters

Notice that the thought(s) vanish so the board is blank again

Another thought comes and you write it on the board; or you can draw pictures of the thoughts on the board

Erase them if they are unwanted thoughts

You can also draw/write thoughts on a piece of glass and then shatter the glass to eliminate the thoughts

3. Getting in the Gap

See Space between thoughts meditation

4. Write Affirmations

Choose affirmations and work them into a meditation

For depression the goal is to learn a thought that feels better

One thought could be "I am being mindful"

Take the first word and put it in the upper left corner of your mind

Take the second word and put it in the upper right corner of your mind

Take the third word and put it in the lower left corner of your mind

Take the fourth word and put it in the lower right corner of your mind

Focus on the spaces in between the first two (upper) words

Focus on the spaces in between the second two (lower) words

Breathe and exhale as you focus in between the words

5. Shift Depressive Thoughts

Choose alternative thoughts

Move your mood state from depression to anger

This increase the energy of your mood state

6. Awareness of Emotions

Use an image of waves building and coming into the shore (building of emotion)

They get smaller as they come all the way in and then go out (taking emotion with them)

Repeat

Attend to a current emotion, notice it

Have you felt it before? Is it from your past? Take in the present moment of your emotion

Breathe, pay attention to your posture, how is the feeling in your body?

Have you noticed this body sensation before? Tense or relaxed?

If thoughts come in, notice them, bring yourself back to your emotion

Repeat the process: allow, accept, name the emotions

Remind yourself "I am not my emotion."

7. Using Gratitude

The goal is to shift into that from depression

Breathe

Clear mind

Focus attention on your heart

Breathe through your heart

Remember a time you felt appreciation or gratitude

8. Sending Love and Compassion

Start with meditation breathing

Send love and compassion to

 Yourself: "May I be well, may I be happy, may I be free from suffering."

 A close friend: "May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering."

 A neutral person (e.g., store cashier): "May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering."

 A difficult person in your life: "May ____ be well, may ____ be happy, may ____ be free from suffering."

 All together (everyone you have used for this exercise): "May everyone be well, may everyone be happy, may everyone be free from suffering."

 To the universe: "May the universe be well, may the universe be happy, may the universe be free from suffering."

9. Shift from Negative to Positive

Bring your attention inside to your thoughts, be aware and let it go

Put it in a bubble, then pop the bubble and the thoughts disappear

Breathe, look around at something good, take it in

Do imagery of something good

Staying Present

1. Stay grounded in present moment

Remind yourself of date and time and where you are

2. Do a body scan, attending to each part
3. Contact Mindfulness
Notice where each part of your body is touching
As you do that say "contact"

Panic

1. Use relaxation breathing (make eye contact with someone or something, breathe)
2. Visualize your hands getting warmer

Anger

- Increase awareness of thoughts, emotions, actions
 - Identify triggers for anger
 - Use skills to calm arousal state, change situation
1. Vanishing thoughts
 2. Tuning into warning thoughts
 3. Mindfulness of Emotion
 4. Body scan
 5. Taking pulse
 6. Variation of relaxation breathe (stop, breathe, exhale away the anger)
 7. Focus on bottom of feet (reduces the intensity of the anger)
Put feet on floor, breathe, do nothing
Remember an angry event, let feelings come, stay with anger, notice the signs
Shift attention to soles/bottoms of your feet, move toes, feels shoes on feet, arch heels
Keep breathing, focus on feel until you feel calm
When calm can walk away or respond calmly

Pain

1. Accept and embrace pain
Embrace and feel
Breathe, take inventory of pain
Notice it without trying to change it
Embrace it, hug it, accept it without resistance
Thank the pain for doing its job
Can also see a white healing light running through body enveloping pain
2. Relax around pain
3. Distract from pain

Do movement

Lazy River

Mindful Tasks

4. Remember a time when you felt well

Breathe

Choose a time when you felt healthy/good

Get a good picture of that

Keep it for the future

Sleep Problems

- Learn to calm busy thoughts
- Relax mind and body
- 1. Awareness of breath, thought, emotion
- 2. Body scan
- 3. Sleep meditation
- Count 1-10 (inhale on odd numbers, exhale on even numbers)
- Let go of focus on breath, let mind go
- Bring attention back
- Notice sounds, smells, physical sensations

Exercises available from Karen Cogan

- 10 Minute Mindfulness Audio File
- 20 Minutes Mindfulness Audio File
- 10 Minute Body Scan Audio File
- Competition Audio File FEN
- Dealing with Unexpected Audio File (FEN)
- Competition Audio File (DIV)

Apps

- Headspace - Free, can also buy additional sessions
- Breathe2Relax - for deep breathing (used a lot at the VA Hospital for veterans) - Free
- Buddhify2 - \$2.99 but you choose the activity and guided meditation to go along with it
- Omvana - you can create your own program using their music, meditations - Free

- Relax and Rest Guided Meditations - good for those with sleep issues or someone wanting to learn more about meditation - \$1.99
- The Mindfulness App - Has a range of meditations from 3 to 30 minutes and has a place to set notices to "do a body scan for stress" - \$1.99

PODCASTS: (all are free)

- Audioharma.org - has hundreds of talks by some leading meditation gurus and also has a six-week intro to meditation
- Meditationoasis.com - lots of short podcasts that are both meditations and talks
- Tarabrach.com - Brach a meditation teacher talks you through guided meditations and some more that are fairly advanced
- The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (at marc.ucla.edu); click on Free Guided Meditations - an audio introduction to mindfulness meditation, and some episodes that are 30 minutes long that are meditation and inspirational talks

Research

- Mindfulness.org