



Mindful Breathing

Practicing mindful breathing helps us train our spotlight of attention.

Everyday mindfulness is an essential building block for emotion regulation. It helps your mind to recognise, accept, and understand the purpose of emotions.

Mindfulness also helps you control impulses, so you stay on track with your goals and values even when you experience strong emotions.

It gives you clarity and awareness to keep doing what matters in spite of negative feelings. Finally, mindfulness is the antidote to unhelpful emotion regulation habits such as avoidance, suppression and rumination.

So what is mindfulness? Sometimes mindfulness is explained as a way to combat our habit of operating on 'automatic pilot' - when we become lost or distracted by our thoughts and do not pay attention to what is happening in our body or the everyday world. It strengthens the muscle in your mind that can bring your awareness back to the 'here and now', rather than your mind flipping and flopping between thoughts of the past and the future.

Mindfulness can help you control where your mind spends its time which has a big impact on how you feel. If you can control your attention through mindfulness, you can manage your emotions. You learn not to take your thoughts so seriously. Mindfulness gives your mind a resting place, so you can think clearly and make better decisions.

MINDFULNESS ASKS YOU TO:



If you remember nothing else, a mindful breath is 1,2,3.

1. Feel your breath pass through your nostrils for a count of three.
2. Fill your tummy with your breath.
3. Breathe out through your mouth for a count of three. Repeat!



Getting into the habit of practicing mindfulness is a bit like brushing your teeth every day. You usually don't feel any immediate benefit, but you are preventing toothaches. **Check in a few times a day with a mindful breath to help keep your mind clean.**



MINDFUL BREATHING

Imagine that focusing your attention is just like shining a spotlight. You can point it at something and look at it in detail. Things outside your spotlight are still there, but they aren't your focus. The first time you try this exercise, it might feel like your spotlight is jumping all over the place. With lots of practice, this exercise helps you train your attention, so you can keep your spotlight steady and focused.

1. Turn the spotlight inwards...

Notice what is happening **right now**. Shine the spotlight on your:

- Thoughts.
- Feelings.
- Body signals.



2. Turn the spotlight on your breath...

- Put your hands on your tummy and notice it rise and fall as you breathe in and out.
- Gently bring your attention to the tip of your nose, where the air flows in and out of your nostrils.
- If you notice your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to your nose or tummy.



3. Stand back and put the spotlight on your whole body...

- Notice how you are sitting, your shoulders, the expression on your face, feelings in your muscles or on your skin.
- As best you can, try to keep the spotlight of attention on your experiences throughout today.



PRACTICE & REFLECT

Mindfulness is a skill that takes practice to learn. Make this practice part of your routine – something you can slip in to your day. Practice mindful breathing at least twice a day for the next week. Tick it off in the calendar after you have had a go.

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning
<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon

How were you feeling after practicing? Did you notice any difference?

What were you feeling and thinking afterwards?