

Practicing Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Being fully present in the moment, aware of where we are and what we are doing

Easy Ways to Practice Mindfulness:

1. Pay attention to what is going on around you using your senses – touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste.
2. Live in the moment, bringing attention to everything you do
3. Accept yourself and treat yourself with respect
4. Focus on your breathing during negative thoughts

Simple Mindfulness Exercises:

Belly Breathing. Breathe from the belly, not the chest. To learn how, sit in a chair and lean forward placing your elbows on your knees. Breathing naturally in this position forces you to breathe from the belly. This stimulates the vagus nerve, activating your relaxation response, reducing your heart rate and blood pressure, and lowering stress levels.

Starting the Day with Purpose. Sit in a relaxed position and focus on your seated body. Take three slow belly breaths and set your intention for the day (*for example: Today I will be patient with others, eat well, and have fun*). Be sure to check in with yourself throughout the day.

Body scan meditation. Lie on your back, palms facing up. Slowly bring attention to each part of your body, working from head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body.

Walking meditation. Begin to walk slowly in a quiet place. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance.

Mindful Eating:

1. Eat when your body tells you – learn your hunger cues and listen to them, avoid emotional eating.
2. Set yourself up for success- think about and prepare meals and snacks rather than wandering around when hungry.
3. Nourish your body - When we eat a variety of healthier foods, we are less likely to binge on comfort foods.
4. Stop when full – eat slowly and listen to your body to allow your brain to catch up.
5. At mealtimes only eat - distractions such as watching TV or paying bills, leads to not listening to your body's need.
6. Consider where your food comes from – We often think of food as an end product, try considering all of the time and effort that went into creating a meal. Express thanks to the people who grew and harvested, the ancestors who shared recipes, etc.



Resources:

[Mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

[Mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org)

[Harvard.edu](https://www.harvard.edu)