



Daily mindfulness exercises

MINDFUL EXERCISES TO
IMPROVE FOCUS AND MINDSET

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MINDFUL MEDITATION

Meditation and Mindfulness go hand in hand but they are not the same practice. Meditation is a useful tool to cultivate the state of mindfulness. It helps you train your mind where you want to focus rather than getting caught up in mind chatter

For example, an athlete will practice to perform at their game

- Meditation is the practice
- Mindfulness is the performance
- Life is the game

- Turn off all appliances or set to silent mode. Set a gentle alarm for when you wish to stop meditating. 10 minutes is a good amount to start with.
- Try to sit upright as it promotes alertness but be comfortable.
- Be aware of how you feel now, during and after. Feel free to make notes.
- Close your eyes. Keep your breathing natural for you. Just be aware of how it feels through your nose or the rise and fall of your chest.
- Become aware of where you are holding tension within the body e.g jaw, shoulders. Accept those sensations and do not judge them, allow them to subside naturally.
- Carry on focussing on your breathing and let thoughts go as they arise. Every time you notice a thought, just accept it and continually come back to your breathing rather than exploring the thought.



WAKING MEDITATION

This type of meditation is great when you're on the go and struggling to make time for a Mindful Meditation.

Activities could include brushing your teeth, washing up or hoovering.


Try to choose something that's a repetitive exercise as it provides an easy structure to focus on.

- Start the activity with the intention to focus. Instead of letting your mind wander throughout, gently bring your attention back to the body each time you realize the mind has strayed.
- What can you see? What can you hear? What's the colour of the toothpaste? The smell? What flavour is it? Use these types of questions to come back to the present within the activity.
- Gently focus your attention on the sensations, just as you would concentrate on your breathing during meditation. Be mindful of your body movements and the sound of the toothbrush against your teeth for example. Be aware of how the bristles feel against your gums and teeth.
- Use meditations to practice non-judgement. If you hear a distracting noise, do not think "the sound of that car has ruined my focus". Let your thought be "that is a car", accept it and move on. This will help you to remain focussed outside of the meditation and to be less irritable when provoked by everyday problems.

5 SENSES EXERCISE

Use this to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses. You can try this whilst listening to music or walking.

- What are 5 things you can see? Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or an object in the corner of a room.
- What are 4 things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your clothes resting on your body, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.
- What are 3 things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.
- What are 2 things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing bin can or blocked drain.
- What is 1 thing you can taste? Have a piece of chewing gum, sip a drink, eat a snack if you can, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. "Taste" the air to see how it feels on your tongue.



AFFIRMATIONS AND INTENTIONS

Affirmations are a great way to build self-esteem and worth. By repeating positive statements about ourselves, we begin to believe them. This confidence will show through in our actions, as our beliefs in our abilities shift from negative to positive.

- Choose your affirmations and write them down daily.
- In a work context you might choose “I am focussed”, “I will achieve my goals today”, “I am confident with members of the public”, “I have great ideas and make useful contributions”.
- In a personal context if you lack self-esteem you can state “I love myself and I allow myself to be loved”, “I will not compare myself to others”. or “I fully accept myself as I am, I am enough”. Set affirmations as a screen saver or write them on your mirror so they are often visible.
- You can also use affirmations to set strong intentions for the day. “I am going to finish my deadline” or “I will make time for myself today”. Make these powerful statements like a to-do list for your personal and corporate life. You should be aiming to complete at least 70% of your list daily.
- It is important to clear out negative blockages in order to start believing your affirmations. For example, affirm that mistakes are there to be learnt from, you are not defined by your past and you deserve to be happy.

GRATITUDE AM TO PM

The greatest goal in life is to be happy. Mindfulness encourages us to be satisfied in the present moment. When we are able to realize and accept each moment for what it is, we are then able to appreciate the little things we take for granted on a moment-by-moment basis.

- In the morning, before you start your day, make a written list of 3 things you are grateful for. If you're struggling to think of things – start general. For example “I am grateful for the body I am in, I am blessed to have a bed to sleep on, I am thankful for sunlight”. Doing this can instantly shift your mindset from negative toward positive .
- You can also do this activity in the middle of the day if you need to focus on something positive in the present moment to stay grounded.
- Also feel free to repeat before you go to bed, especially to acknowledge anything good that happened during the day. It helps you to go to sleep with a sense of satisfaction.
- Write what you're grateful for on slips of paper and put them in a gratitude jar. Revisit them when you need cheering up.
- Identify 3 things you take for granted but are thankful for.
- Identify 3 things you appreciate about yourself.
- Identify 3 people who have positively impacted your life and thank them.