

Mindfulness Practice and Application

Core concept: These exercises help us practice the skills that lead to Wise Mind. Try these Mindfulness exercises and create your own. Mindfulness needs to be part of your daily routine. Enjoy!

Attention to Small Moments. Small moments in our lives include those that we do not typically notice or those we take for granted. It may be having a cup of coffee or a cool glass of water, spending a moment with a child or pet, or performing any “normal” activity that goes by without our attention. Enjoyment, peace, and serenity in life happen in the small moments. Each hour, orient yourself to the small moments that you might otherwise miss.

Focus on Senses. Take time to notice what comes through your five senses: what you see, hear, smell, taste, and/or touch. Your senses are your gateway to the world.

Breathing. We all breathe, and we can all breathe more effectively. Our breath is our anchor and is an excellent way to center ourselves. Take time to breathe mindfully in and out. Stay focused on the sensation of the air coming into your air passages and lungs, holding it, and then letting it out. Use a mantra, such as “in” as you breathe in and “out” as you breathe out, or count each breath from 1 to 10, starting over when you reach 10 or if you lose count. Another way to breath mindfully is to notice the beginning, middle, and end of each inhalation and exhalation (like how you can hear the beginning, middle, and end of sounds—another mindfulness exercise). Concentrate on the life of each breath going in and out.

Quiet/Still Time. Set time aside each day to be quiet and to experience that quiet. Be one-mindful with the stillness, finding your center and noticing comfort in the moment.

Your Favorite Song (or Album). Listen to your favorite song or album with your full attention. Listen closely to the lyrics and their meaning. Be mindful of each word and phrase. Listen to the sounds of the different instruments. Pay attention to the guitar, bass, drums, vocals, or any other instrument that is central to the music. Notice the production values: Is the song basic or elaborate? Bare bones or highly orchestrated? Be mindful of things you have never noticed in music you have listened to many times.

Your Favorite Show. Watch your favorite TV show, paying attention to the small details. Notice what the actors are wearing, how the sets are designed and decorated, and other elaborate details that go into your show.

The Room You Know So Well. Observe and Describe details that you never noticed about your bedroom, living room, office, or any other place in which you have spent significant time.

10 Details. Anyplace, anywhere, pause and Observe and Describe 10 details you would not have otherwise noticed.

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Turn Down the Noise (Or Embrace It): Turn off all extra sources of noise in your home. If you are not mindfully listening to the radio or TV, turn it off. Work on being present without the competition for your attention. If you are unable to turn down certain noises, practice being mindfully aware of them, noticing them without judgment.

Watching: Be a watcher of people, or of anything that might hold your interest. Remember not to judge what you see, but simply let it into and out of your experience like clouds floating through the sky.

One Chore/One Task: Do one chore or one task, such as washing the dishes or folding laundry, with all of your attention and care. Be one-mindful with the experience without adding or subtracting.

“Holding” a Feeling: Hold your present feeling like it is a baby. Calming a distraught baby involves compassion and one-mindfulness. Babies can tell when we are either frustrated or do not want to be with them in the moment. Our feelings are like babies. They can tell when we either reject them or are not fully present with them. Holding your feeling and being mindful of it will usually cause it to diminish in intensity. If not, consider distraction skills.

Interconnection: Contemplate how you are connected to all of the items around you, to your surroundings, to all of the people in your life, and/or to the universe in general.

Relative Thinking: Contemplate the upsides and downsides of any judgment without sticking to any conclusions. See how “good” and “bad” depend on the circumstances and are not fixed.

5/60: Plan 5 minutes out of every hour to engage in a mindfulness activity. This may include breathing, doing a scan of your body for tension and then relaxing, or one-mindfully accomplishing any task.

Find Your Center: Before engaging in thoughts and behavior, spend a moment to breathe and find your center. Know that finding your center helps you to access your Wise Mind. Practice the directives of the mantra: pause, breath, center ... enter.

Fly Away/Balloon Release: Write whatever you would like to let go of on a helium balloon with a permanent marker. Release the balloon into the sky and watch it with your full attention until it is completely out of your vision. Alternatively, write what you would like to let go of on paper and shred or burn it or place the paper under water and watch the ink wash away and disappear.