

February 2024

# Newsletter



## Mental Wellness

### MINDFULNESS DURING THE WINTER SEASON

It's that time of year again. People have less to look forward to and are complaining about the weather. But is it really as bad as we think it is?

I always thought I hated to be out in the rain. I started coaching soccer last year and there were a few days our practices were played on a rainy day. As I was out there coaching I remembered just how much I loved playing soccer in the rain when I was younger by experiencing this again with the kids! Realizing I forgot about this, I decided to be more aware of the weather and not let it negatively affect my day or my mood.

So to do that I decided to create a temperature blanket. I am tracking temperatures and observing if it is sunny or cloudy to practice being more mindful of the weather each day. To do this, I made a color-coded card to help me choose the colors of yarn that match with a range of temperatures. Next, I crochet a line of a blanket in the designated color each day of the year.

In the short time I have been doing this, I am already more aware of the weather. So far my blanket is showing that the temperatures have been mild.

I have a challenge for you! Instead of complaining about the weather, make an intentional effort to be more aware. You may realize that even in the weather we may not like to be outside in, we can practice being more mindful of finding joy in the little things around us. We can bring our attention to each day instead of just assuming it has been gray, raining, or snowing for days straight. To do this, let's practice by *observing* and *describing* what we see rather than just listening to others' complaints.

Let's challenge ourselves to get out in the weather with an open mind, and maybe it won't be as bad as we think it is!

Stefanie Montgomery, LPC

Join our private Facebook group! A place to learn, share, and encourage the practice of mindfulness, Yin yoga, and DBT skills!



Welcome to the  
**Rock Creek Wellness  
Community**

DBT • Mindfulness • Yin Yoga

Learning to love...you!

# Yin Yoga

## BOX BREATHING

Box breathing or square breathing is a simple technique and a powerful tool in managing stress and anxiety. Breathing is something we do naturally, often without much thought. But what if changing the way we breathe could unlock a host of benefits for body and mind?

Box breathing is known for improving physiological responses, helping to calm the mind, and bringing focus. This breathing technique is designed to give a rhythmic, even pattern to breathing. It works by distracting your mind as you count to four, calming your nervous system, and decreasing stress in your body. It's been linked to numerous health benefits including:

- **Stress reduction and anxiety management**
- **Improved focus and concentration**
- **Lowered heart rate and blood pressure**
- **Enhanced relaxation and sleep quality**
- **Emotional balance**

Box breathing isn't just about taking in oxygen and releasing carbon dioxide. It's a simple mindfulness technique that can help to calm you mentally while also supporting your physical health.

Box breathing is as simple and accessible as it is powerful. This technique can help you to feel more relaxed and grounded. Here is how to practice:

- 1. Find a quiet space:** Choose a spot where you can sit or lie comfortably in a relatively quiet environment (if possible).
- 2. Close your eyes:** It's not essential, but closing your eyes can help you focus on yourself.
- 3. Inhale for four seconds:** Breathe in deeply, feeling your lungs fill up, counting to four slowly. Imagine you're drawing energy into your body.



**4. Hold that breath:** Hold that breath in for another four seconds. It might feel strange at first, but it'll feel more natural with practice.

**5. Exhale slowly:** Exhale for four seconds, releasing the air steadily. Imagine all your stresses and worries leaving your body as you breathe.

**6. Hold again:** Hold for another four seconds. This pause signals to your body that another 'box' or cycle is about to begin.

Box breathing offers a predictable rhythm in a world that's often unpredictable.

Start practicing for a few minutes, gradually increasing as you become more comfortable. A four-second count isn't set in stone—if you prefer, try three or five seconds. The key is to keep each segment equal.

Joelene Edmondson. RYT, CMC

A promotional graphic with a warm, orange and yellow background. At the top, it says "Learning To Love..." in a light blue font. Below that, "YOU CREW!" is written in a large, stylized, light blue font. Underneath, "ADVENTURE" is written in a smaller, light blue font. A white rounded rectangle contains the text "Winter Walk" in a cursive, light blue font. At the bottom, another white rounded rectangle contains the text "CLEAR CREEK STATE FOREST MCKEEVER SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH 9:30 - 10:30 AM" in a bold, light blue font.

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