



# Be present in all that you do

We spend a lot of time thinking about the past: telling stories, regretting our actions or feeling happy. We also spend time thinking about the future. We plan dinner, study for tests and worry. We often ignore the present. Our minds wander and we complete tasks without thought. This is called being on autopilot. On autopilot, we ignore how we feel physically and emotionally. We do not think about the people or the world around us. We make quick decisions based on past decisions and we ignore negative habits.

## Take a mindfulness break

Mindfulness is the opposite of autopilot. It means being completely aware of what's happening in the present moment. You are receptive to all feelings – good and bad – and try to be nonjudgmental about them. This allows yourself to see the bigger picture.

Mindfulness practices are activities or habits that help us stop and notice our body, our thoughts and feelings, other people or our environment. Becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Any activity that helps you slow down and be aware of the present is useful.



## Did you know?

Being mindful can reduce stress, anxiety and pain, increase productivity, increase feelings of happiness and contentment, improve depression symptoms, and help manage post-traumatic stress disorder.



# Six ways to practice mindfulness.

## 1. Meditate

To meditate means to concentrate or think deeply. To start, be comfortable but alert. Some people sit upright, others lie down. Try breathing exercises, a body scan, or guided meditation activity to quiet the mind. Breathe in through your nose to a count of four, hold for one second, and then exhale through the mouth to a count of five. Notice the sensation of each inhale and exhale. Activities like yoga, tai chi, crocheting, or knitting can also help people reach a calm, focused state. When thoughts arise during a meditation, try to simply observe them and let them go without judgement or reaction.

## 2. Notice how your body and mind feel

Pay attention to how each body part feels. Start at your head. Can you relax your scalp, face, or jaw? Move your attention down your body, noticing and relaxing. Do a quick emotional check too. How are you feeling? Your mood affects how you behave and treat others. Sometimes, just noticing your emotions can help you address them.

## 3. Keep a journal or diary

Carve out a few minutes each week to reflect on how you're feeling and express gratitude. Putting your thoughts on to paper can help you process emotions and relieve stress.

## 4. Get outdoors

Take time to appreciate the world around you with an outdoor walk or bike ride. Don't push yourself like you would on a hike or a workout. Notice your breath and the signs and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, note them, but then return to the present.

## 5. Savor your meals

Slow down and savor the flavor. Take small bites, chew thoroughly, and allow yourself time to eat. Be aware of taste, textures, and flavors in each bite, and listen to your body when you are hungry or full.

## 6. Create a morning ritual

Carve out 15 minutes first thing in the morning for a little alone time before checking email, scrolling social media, tuning into the news, or getting ready for work. At the start of your workday, look at your calendar and list of tasks for the day. Write down what you hope to achieve. If a task feels overwhelming, break it down into smaller steps. This will help you act with purpose instead of falling into time-stealing habits.



For information on your mental well-being benefits, visit  
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