

MINDFULNESS

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY
WITH MINDFULNESS:
A BOOKLET OF MINDFULNESS
EXERCISES

LIST OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

1 Mindful Breathing

Audio available on:

- MindShift (3 min)
- Stop, Breathe & Think (3-10 min)
- Mindfulness Coach (9 min)

2 Body Scan

Audio available on:

- MindShift (9 min)
- Stop, Breathe & Think (8 min)
- Mindfulness Coach (9 min)

3 Leaves on a Stream/Clouds in the Sky

Audio available on:

- Mindfulness Coach (7 min)

4 Engaging your Senses

Audio available on:

- Stop, Breathe & Think (5 min)

5 Observing an Object

6 Loving Kindness Meditation

Audio available on:

- Stop, Breathe & Think (6 min)

MINDFUL BREATHING

Find a comfortable sitting posture. Put your feet flat on the ground and try to straighten your back. Gently close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears. Pay attention to your breathing and just allow yourself to continue to breathe naturally.

Now, rest your hands gently on your belly with the fingertips of each hand lightly touching in the middle. Breathe in smoothly through your nose. And exhale slowly through your mouth. Continue to take slow, smooth breaths. When you breathe in, notice your belly push your hands gently apart, as you fill your lower lungs with air. When you breathe out, notice your belly sink back towards your spine as you release your breath. You can imagine that your belly is a balloon. Fill it with air and then watch it deflate. Now continue to focus on the gentle inhalation and exhalation of your breath. In...and out... If any other thoughts or images come into your mind during this exercise, just notice them, and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

You may also become aware of physical sensations or feelings in your body. Simply notice them, and then again, bring your mind back to your breath. You don't need to analyze or give these thoughts or feelings any meaning in this moment. Simply acknowledge them without judgment and bring your mind back to your breath. It's normal for your mind to wander. Simply notice that your mind has wandered and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Continue to focus on your breathing and stay in this relaxed state for as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.

BODY SCAN

1. Begin by feeling the weight of your body on the chair. Notice the points of contact between that and your body.
2. Become aware of the sensations of your breath. You may feel the breath going in and out of your nostrils, or passing through the back of your throat, or feel the chest or belly rising and falling.
3. When you're ready, move your awareness down into the big toe of your left foot. Notice the sensations in your big toe with a sense of curiosity. Is it warm or cold? Now expand your awareness to your little toe, then all the toes in between. What do they feel like? If you can't feel any sensation, that's okay.
4. As you breathe, imagine the breath going down your body and into your toes. As you breathe out, imagine the breath going back up your body and out of your nose. Use this strategy of breathing into and out of each part to which you're paying attention.
5. Expand your awareness to the sole of your foot. Focus on the ball and heel of the foot. The weight of the heel. The sides and upper part of the foot. The ankle. Breathe into the whole of the left foot. Then, when you're ready, let go of the left foot.
6. Repeat this process of gentle, kind, curious accepting awareness with the lower part of the left leg, the knee and the upper part of the left leg.
7. Gently shift your awareness around and down the right leg, to the toes in your right foot. Move your awareness up the right leg in the same way as before. Then let it go.
8. Move up to the lower torso, the lower abdomen and lower back. Notice the movement of the lower abdomen as you breathe in and out. Notice any emotions you feel here. See if you can explore and accept your feelings as they are.
9. Bring your attention to your chest and upper back. Feel your rib cage rising and falling as you breathe in and out. Be mindful of your heart beating if you can.
10. Go to both arms, beginning with the fingertips and moving up to the shoulders. Breathe into and out of each body part before you move to the next one, if that feels helpful.
11. Focus on your neck. Move your mindful attention to your jaw, feel your lips, inside your mouth, your cheeks, your nose, your eyelids and eyes, your temples, your forehead and checking if it's frowning, your eyes, the back of your head, and finally the top of your head.
12. Gently bring your attention back to the room and slowly open your eyes.



LEAVES ON A STREAM

OR CLOUDS IN THE SKY

Imagine you are sitting or standing in the middle of a stream. The water is flowing away in front of you.

Notice if there is any sound from the running water. Notice if there are any trees, etc. on the banks of the stream.

Now see leaves floating down the stream away from you. They can be any shape, colour, or size. As thoughts come into your mind, be aware of what the thought is, and then place it on a leaf.

Now watch it float away down the stream. Do this with each thought as you notice it.

As you acknowledge each of your thoughts, you do not need to hang onto them. There is no need to become attached to the thought. Just acknowledge it and then place it on a leaf.

By watching it float away, it loses its hold on you and its intensity.

Do the same thing for each sensation or feeling that arises. Notice and label each experience as a thought, feeling, sensation, judgment, and place it on a leaf, watching it float down the stream.

When you are ready, begin to bring your awareness back to the feeling of your body on the chair, the sounds in the room, and slowly open your eyes.



ENGAGING YOUR SENSES

Sit in a comfortable upright position with your feet planted flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your thighs. Begin to notice your breath. It's time to engage each of your 5 senses, one at a time, for at least one minute each.

Hearing: Begin to relax by just noticing all of the sounds around you. Give yourself permission to suspend your judgment of the sounds. They are not good or bad, they just are. Are you now hearing more than you were before you started? Subtle sounds may have previously gone unnoticed. Can you hear them now?

Smell: Now shift your concentration to noticing the smells of your environment. Is somebody cooking lunch in your building? Can you detect the electronics smell of your computer or fresh air coming in through your window? Try closing your eyes so you can focus on the subtlest of scents.

Sight: If you closed your eyes a moment ago, open them to notice the colours, shapes and textures of your surroundings. If you really look, just about everything has colour variation and texture that may have gone unnoticed. How many shades of blue or red? Any colour missing?

Taste: You can do this one regardless of whether or not you have food to put in your mouth. Just notice your tongue in your mouth, your saliva, and your breath as you exhale. Most of us have tastes in our mouth at all times. Run your tongue over your teeth and cheeks - what do you notice?

Touch: Where did you place your hands when you first started this exercise? Notice the sensation of where your hands meet something solid like the fabric of your clothes or the surface of your desk. Notice the pressure between your feet and the floor. Try feeling the textures that you noticed by sight a moment ago. To fully ground yourself in the room and bring the exercise to a close, feel several objects on your desk and perhaps even stand up from your chair to bring energy and sensation to all parts of your body.

OBSERVING AN OBJECT

Pick up an object that you have around you. Any everyday object will do...a coffee cup or a pen for example. Hold it in your hands and allow your attention to be fully absorbed by the object. Observe it. Don't assess it or think about it, or study it intellectually. Just observe it for what it is. When your mind wanders, just bring your attention back to the object. Notice what it looks like, how it feels in your hands. Notice the colours, textures, shapes. Explore the object as if you had never seen it before. Slowly begin to broaden your attention to the room, to the touch of your body on the chair, to the sounds and sights around you.



LOVING KINDNESS

Start by being comfortable in your chair, with your back gently supported, in a relaxed posture. Let your eyes close, fully or partially. Take a few easy, slow breaths, bring your awareness to your body and into the present moment. (Pause)

Bring to mind a person or another living being who naturally makes you smile. This could be a child, a grandparent, a pet – whoever naturally brings happiness to your heart and a smile to your face. If you can't think of a living being, think back to a memory of a place where you felt happy and at ease. Allow the feelings of what it is like to be in the company of that being to come into the present moment. Allow yourself to enjoy their company. (Pause)

Now, recognize how vulnerable this loved one is. Just like you, vulnerable to life events, bad things happening: sickness, aging, difficult events. And just like you and every other living being, your loved one wishes to be happy and healthy and free from suffering. Keeping the warm, kind, loving feelings you have for your loved one close to your heart, repeat to yourself, silently, slowly, softly and gently, feeling the importance of your words:

*May you be safe and free from harm
May you be healthy and free from suffering
May you have contentment and peace of mind
May you care for yourself with ease and well-being*

When you notice that your mind has wandered, return to the words and the image of the loved one you have in mind. Return to the feelings of warmth, kindness, love and compassion. Now add yourself to your circle of warmth and good will. If it feels comfortable, place your hand over your heart, feel the warmth and comfort of your hand, and say, repeat to yourself silently, slowly and gently:

*May you and I be safe and free from harm
May you and I be healthy and free from suffering
May you and I have contentment and peace of mind
May you and I care for ourselves with ease and well-being*

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LOVING KINDNESS

CONTINUED

Visualize your whole body in your mind's eye, noticing any tension, discomfort, stress or uneasiness that may be lingering within you, and offer warmth, comfort, and kindness to yourself.

May I be safe and free from harm

May I be healthy and free from suffering

May I have contentment and peace of mind

May I care for myself with ease and well-being

Now bring your attention to your breath, take a few easy comfortable breaths and just rest quietly in your own body, savoring the good will and compassion that flows naturally from your own heart. (Pause)

If you are ever swept up in emotion, you can always return to your breathing. Then, when you're comfortable again, returning to the phrases.

When you're ready, take a few breaths, begin to wiggle your fingers and toes to bring energy back to your body, and bring yourself back to the room. Then gently open your eyes. If you turned your screen off at the start of the exercise, please turn it back on.

