

# The ABCs of STOP: Three Short Mindful Breaks for Your Day

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The [STOP acronym](#) is one of the most well-known and cherished brief mindfulness practices to use during the day. It's super simple:

S – Stop

T – Take a breath

O – Observe what's going on

P – Proceed

This can be done any time during the day when you remember. You become aware of what's going on around you or inside of you, you ground yourself with some conscious breaths, and then you proceed with more clarity and from a place of choice.

Here are three wonderful ways to practice *STOP* in more depth: The ABCs of *STOP*—or practicing *STOP* for Awareness, Beauty, and Compassion:

## **STOP — A: STOP for *awareness***

Using the STOP practice to become fully aware of the present moment: What is going on in the body? The mind? The emotional field? Or asking yourself: What is *out* of my awareness right now? It can be as simple as noticing your brain is foggy after being on a conference call for two hours (and that you need a stretch break) or that you have been thinking about the upcoming teacher meeting all morning. Simply [stop and take a breath](#).

## **STOP — B: STOP for *beauty***

Pause for a moment and notice something beautiful in your surroundings. It can literally be to “stop and smell the roses.” Use all of your senses to find something and then take it in for a breath or two. If that feels too big of a stretch you can ask yourself: “Ok, I know this is a stressful moment right now, but if there was something beautiful about it, what would it be?” Maybe then we notice the flowers on the table, which blend into the background when we are busy. Or the beautiful braids of the woman in front of us in the (long!) check out line at the grocery store.

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## **STOP — C: STOP for *compassion***

In a moment of stress or pain, practice *STOP* to open your heart to kindness and [compassion](#). Compassion is a natural, caring response to suffering, big and small, in ourselves and in others. Sometimes the tug of compassion calls us to stop, at other times we need to stop and really take something in, so we can open the doors of the heart and invite compassion in. Maybe we are a little impatient with our child complaining at length about something that happened at recess. Maybe the adult brain doesn't see it as hurtful but stopping and truly listening might allow us to connect with the truth of her hurt and allow our heart to melt a little.

I hope you enjoy these little gems and they help to bring more mindful moments to your day.

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