

# The Mindfulness Guide for People Too Busy to Meditate

Do you want to practice mindfulness but don't have time in your busy schedule to sit down and meditate? Try these simple ways to pause and be mindful throughout your day

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When you're constantly busy adjusting and improving your life, work, and relationships, you're bound to feel stressed. Maybe you become anxious when you evaluate your life, or perhaps you feel depressed because you're falling short of your goals. Mindfulness is a strategy for directing yourself away from these self-incriminating thoughts. It's a meditative practice of paying attention to your body, mind, and surroundings in a nonjudgmental manner. Even if you have only a few minutes a day for mindfulness, the change in your mental and physical health will be palpable.

There are multiple benefits from inserting mindfulness into your daily routine, even if it's just for a couple of minutes. Mindful people are able to bounce back faster from low moods, and they spend less energy and time on negative thinking. They also tend to be more resilient against depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. Mindfulness even can help you feel more creative and thoughtful about your work and your relationships. So let's take a look at a few simple techniques that take only a few seconds to practice every day.

## Listening

Whether you're meeting someone for the first time or talking with a family

member, a mindful individual will listen with fresh ears. Consider the meaning they're trying to convey, and observe what is special about this individual. When you consider what you could learn from them, you delay the automatic way you judge people. Refusing to simply size people up can help you be less negative about the world around you, which leads to less stress and anxiety.

Article continues below

## **Worried you may be suffering from a mental health disorder?**

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### **Sensing**

So often people eat at their desks or in front of the television. Paying attention to your five senses will make you feel calmer and can also help you observe your relationship with food. The next time you eat a piece of food, take the time to smell it, feel it, and look at it. Taste it and chew slowly. You also can practice using your senses when walking outside. Maybe you're in your backyard or at a busy street corner. Stop and pay attention to what you hear, see, and smell. Take a deep breath and draw your mind away from any negative or stressful thoughts you have.

### **Breathing**

Simple breathing exercises can make a huge difference in your daily mood. To practice, sit up straight in a chair with your feet on the floor. Pay attention to what it feels like to breathe in and out. Focus on your stomach as it rises and falls with each breath. If your mind strays to your to-do list or your worries,

then don't judge yourself. Just gently direct your thoughts back to the exercise. If you have trouble directing yourself, you can find breathing exercise instructions or videos online.

## **Observing**

A simple observational exercise can also bring you back to the here-and-now when you feel overwhelmed at work or at home. To practice, find an object that you use or encounter every day, like a pen or a bar of soap. Look at it with fresh eyes and in a way you might have not noticed it before. This exercise works great when you're showering and have time to direct your mind away from responsibilities. You might find that you've gained a greater appreciation for the world around you if you take the time to stop and observe closely with new eyes.

There's always time in a busy schedule for any of these exercises. Some techniques, like careful listening in a conversation or meeting, or using your five senses, can be practiced any time of the day. Others require a little more intention. For breathing techniques, consider setting aside a few minutes each day to move towards a quiet space in your home, office, or outside. Creating a special place for you to unwind and feel positive and safe can make a huge difference.

Mornings and evenings are also excellent times to practice mindfulness. A few minutes of calm can give you energy for the day ahead, and some deep breaths before bed can help you sleep more soundly without worrying about the next day. Also, remember that even if you carve out the time, mindfulness may not be easy at first. Be kind to yourself, and don't beat yourself up if you have trouble focusing or sitting still for more than a few minutes. Over time, the process will feel more and more natural to you.

Remember, setting aside space and energy for your mental health is anything but selfish. Consider today how you can carve out time to simply observe and

exist right where you are, without judgment.

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