

Two Mindful Ways to Stop Touching Your Face

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All the public health experts tell us emphatically to not touch our face, most especially if we've been out in the world and our hands have not been recently washed or disinfected. Good advice. Essential, in fact. It's going to help us stay healthy and stop the viral spread. (Will we ever talk about some silly meme going viral ever again? Maybe that will be a small blessing to come out of an enormous tragedy.)

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There are lots of [good suggestions](#) for limiting face-touching on the internet. Some common suggestions include "being mindful" or "taking a short pause." Also, easier said than done. In that regard, a couple of small tips from the world of meditation may help.

1. **Don't use a negative guideline or prompt** (ha ha).
Better: Use a positive guideline or prompt. When we teach meditation, we avoid suggesting to people what NOT to do, such as don't have angry thoughts. It's like saying to yourself, "Don't think of an elephant?" What do you automatically fixate on? The elephant! When you say to yourself, "Don't touch your face," you're focusing on the thing not to do. A positive prompt is to for example, ask yourself, "Are my hands below my neck?"

2. **Practice hand meditation.** Number 2 follows from #1. Most instructions for sitting or [walking meditation](#) include instructions for where to have your hands, since our hands are such a critical aspect of how our body and mind engage the world. In these circumstances, when you're out in the world and your hands may be compromised (obviously, best to keep washing and disinfecting), you may make your hands the focus of a light mindfulness practice. Instead of resting attention on the breath or your feet touching the ground (as you would in walking meditation), rest attention on your hands. You may find after trying this a few times, it can become an easier habit. For myself, I try to be aware of keeping them down at my sides when I'm not otherwise using them.

Stay healthy and stay safe.

REad more



