

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a state awareness whereby you are focusing your attention on the present, being fully aware and accepting of what you are doing and where you are. More specifically, It allows you to be aware of the feelings, thoughts, surrounding environment and bodily sensations without judging them to be negative or positive.

Mindfulness can come in various forms including mindful walking/movement, mindful listening, mindful observation, mindful eating, mindful breathing, mindfulness of thoughts or feelings, etc.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Incorporating mindfulness into your routine and lifestyle is important and beneficial for a number of reasons:

- Improved self-awareness
- Improved ability to manage emotions
- Decreased stress levels
- Improved sleeping habits
- Reduction in levels of depression and anxiety
- Improved attention and memory
- Entices greater feelings of happiness
- Improved mental clarity and concentration
- Improved creativity and problem solving skills
- Increased relationship satisfaction
- Helps develop self-compassion and self-acceptance
- Can lower blood pressure and heart rate

Mindfulness Tips & Techniques

When it comes to mindfulness, it is important to be patient with yourself and the process, but there are various ways to help make practicing it a little easier and simpler:

- Focus on firstly developing concentration - this is an important and constant component to mindfulness, this can be done by consciously deciding to focus on, feel & observe your breathing. Try not to get frustrated if at first you can't hold your concentration for longer than a few seconds - this is perfectly normal and will take time.
- When your mind wanders due to thoughts, sensations and other distractions bring your attention and focus back to your breathing.
- Forgive and go easy on yourself when experiencing thoughts as they aren't a good thing or a bad thing.
- Increase your awareness by paying attention to all your senses i.e being aware of daily activities - driving, eating etc.
- Slow down and avoid doing too many things at once, notice what you are doing when you are doing it & take time to simply be.
- Recognise that your thoughts are not you, that you do not need to believe them or react to them but instead be aware of them and understand that the thought will pass.
- Go for a walk in nature - notice the movement of your body as you walk and the sights and sounds around you.
- When you first wake up in the morning and/or just before you go to sleep, bring your attention to your breathing.

Mindfulness Exercise

Body Scan - take 3-5 Minutes to complete this exercise:

Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, notice how your body feels - starting at the top of your head and mentally "scan" down your body.

Be aware and notice if you feel any sensations or discomfort. Does that area feel comfortable or uncomfortable? does it feel relaxed or tense?

Repeat this for the rest of your body as you move down - your back, shoulders, chest, arms, hands, hips, legs, feet, etc. You should try to take about 20-30 seconds to focus on each of these body parts.

When you encounter areas of discomfort or tension during the scan, try focus your attention on them and breathe. Try visualizing the tension or discomfort leaving your body.

Take note when thoughts or feelings arise and return your attention to the area of the body where you last left off. Don't try to change anything — you are simply taking a mental image of how the body feels right now, in the moment as you scan through.

Support/Resources

For more information about mental health support contact our EAP Manager via email;
eapsupport@newviewpsychology.com.au
or phone 0451 977 708. You can also access your EAP program for more specialised support with mindfulness and how it can assist you to manage stress.

For immediate support please contact us on 1300 830 687

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