

Mindfulness Practice

Regular mindfulness practice can build up connections to the less reactive part of the brain. Rewiring in this way can help you stay more emotionally calm and mentally focused. This can make it easier to manage the many external and internal stressors in a day. Try for a 10-minute practice each day.

- Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- Sit in a comfortable position with your arms and legs uncrossed. Relax your body.
- Close your eyes if comfortable doing so.
- Bring your thoughts to what you are experiencing in this moment.
- Notice the sensations of your body – your feet on the floor, the weight of your arms.
- Now bring your focus to the natural, easy in and out of your breathing.
- Take a slow, deep breath. Notice the sensation of the breath entering your body.
- Slowly exhale. Feel the air travel out of your body.
- If you like, you can mentally say “calm” as you breathe in and “relax” as you breathe out.
- Continue to breathe slowly and deeply, focusing on your breath.
- If your mind begins to wander, it's okay. Be kind to yourself. Give yourself credit for noticing.
- Imagine those thoughts drifting past like clouds in the sky. Gently return your focus to your breathing.
- There is no right or wrong way to do this practice. Notice all aspects of your experience without judging.
- Keep your focus on how the air moves in and out of your body and the sensations of your body as it does.
- Bring your focus back to your breathing whenever other thoughts begin to take over.
- When you're ready, take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and open your eyes.
- Bring your thoughts back to your present environment.

There are many sources of guided audio mindfulness practices available online.

UCLA Mindful Awareness Center¹
<https://www.uclahealth.org/programs/marc>
offers a good place to start.

There are also many apps that can help you learn and practice mindfulness.

Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/>
is an example offering a wide range of short meditations.

¹ Mindfulness Meditations created by Diana Winston for the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC).
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