

Mindfulness Practices: Finding Your Inner Peace



Health and Wellness

There are many different ways to practice mindfulness.

Whether you have one minute between meetings or the afternoon to yourself, mindfulness can become part of your day. Engaging in mindful behaviors can help you relax, reduce stress and anxiety and can even improve your brain function. Show yourself some love by practicing mindfulness self-compassion.

Breathing Compassion In and Out

Compassionate breathing can be practiced formally or informally throughout the day for any length of time.

- Find a comfortable seated position. Close your eyes and begin taking a few relaxing breaths.
- Scan your body for signs of physical stress, taking note of the location and level of the discomfort. Bring awareness to stressful emotions that you are holding onto. If a challenging person comes to mind, let yourself be aware of the stress associated with that person. If you feel that you are taking on the suffering of another person through empathy, acknowledge that discomfort as well.
- Now that you are more aware of this stress, take a deep breath in, pulling compassion inside of your body. Allow yourself to feel cleansed by giving yourself the compassion you deserve when feeling discomfort.
- As you exhale, send out compassion to the person associated with your discomfort, or exhale that compassion to living beings in general.
- Continue to breathe compassion in and out, internally searching for any distress and respond by inhaling compassion for yourself and exhaling compassion for those who need it.

Self-Compassion Break

During times of stress, it is helpful to locate the stress within your body. Where do you feel it most? Make contact with the stress as you identify it. Now say to yourself:

- **“This is a moment of suffering.”** This is the act of practicing mindfulness.
- **“Suffering is a part of life.”** This is common humanity. Other options include: “Other people feel this way,” “I’m not alone,” and “We all struggle in our lives.” Gently place your hands over your heart, or wherever feels comforting, and enjoy the sensation of the warm touch of your hands.
- **“I will be kind to myself.”** You can also ask yourself, “What do I need to hear right now?”

Soothing Touch Activity

Our skin is one of our most sensitive organs, and providing yourself with a soft hug or soothing touch can release oxytocin in your body

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which has been shown to calm emotions, provide comfort and calm cardiovascular stress. It may feel awkward at first, but your body can’t tell that you’re the one providing the comfort. This is a great way to practice mindfulness at work or if you’re pressed for time.

- At the first sign of stress, take 2–3 deep, soothing breaths.
- Slowly place your hand over your heart, enjoying the sensation of your touch. You can also place both hands on your chest and note the difference in sensation.
- Feel the touch of your hand on your chest. You may also make small circles with your hand.
- As you breathe deeply, feel the natural rising and falling of your chest with each breath in and out.
- Continue doing this until you feel relaxed and stress-free.

Soles of the Feet Activity

This exercise is useful when you have trouble calming yourself down:

- Stand up and focus on the feeling in your feet. Notice how it feels to have your feet pressing against the floor.
- Start walking slowly. With each step, notice how your feet feel. Let your mind wander. Notice any changes in sensation as each foot lifts, moves forward and comes back down on the floor.
- Keep practicing until you start feeling more relaxed.

Source:

Center for Mindful Self-Compassion
www.centerformsc.org/meditations

