



Mindfulness QuickStart Guide

There are many ways to give your brain a break- mindfulness, meditation and sleep are three powerful ones. This guide will focus on mindfulness practice. Remember, this is YOUR practice, however you start will be just fine. Here are some resources that have worked for me.

Why

It feels good! While you practice, and through the day, it is good for your health, and it makes you a better clinician. Evidence continues to accumulate on psychological and physiological benefits.

What

✓ **“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”.** - Jon Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005 edition), *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*

✓ 7 Attitudes of Mindfulness:

✦ Non-judging ✦ Patience ✦ Beginner’s Mind ✦ Trust ✦ Non-striving ✦ Acceptance ✦ Letting Go

- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2004 edition), *Full catastrophe living: How to cope with stress, pain and illness using mindfulness meditation*

✓ Formal and Informal Practice:

Formal practice is setting aside specific time to focus on mindfulness- without interruption.

Informal practice is applying the attributes in daily life- a great one to start with is Presence- being in the moment with whoever you are with. Not thinking about the last thing you didn’t do well, or the next three things on your to do list. This is calming for you and the person you are present with. Try it with friends, family, and patients- notice, without judging what happens.

How

Five minutes/day can make a difference. Set a time to practice- early, late, middle of the day is up to you. Many people find that starting the day with mindfulness sets a positive tone. You can also use a short practice during the day to reset when things get stressful. Start with five minutes and add more time when you wish. Try these methods to see what works best for you.

1. Mindfulness of seeing or hearing: set a timer for five minutes and be present in your surroundings; look or listen without focusing on the story, notice what you see/hear and how it feels at the end of 5 minutes.

2. Breathe: breathing patterns, or simple mindfulness of breath can be a good first step into mindfulness. Your breath is always with you, and your body provides breath continuously with no conscious awareness; adding in that awareness is powerful.

- **Notice how you breathe:** where the air comes in, where you notice it the most, and just be.

- **4-7-8 Breathing:** a popular and effective technique to decrease sympathetic overdrive, and increase parasympathetic relax and repair. Practice this am and hs, and you will notice that your body will quickly reflex to this pattern when you are stressed. It feels good to decrease that constant stress. ([CLICK for Dr. Weil’s version](#), see below for link)

3. Listen to recordings: *The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center* has many free recordings of different mindfulness practices each 3-9 minutes long . Try a few and notice what it is like, remember, there is no right nor wrong way to try. ([CLICK for website](#), see below for link)

4. 8-week MBSR course: While it is not a requirement for being mindful (you can do that all by yourself), as a way to dive in or expand your mindfulness practice, I encourage you to enroll in an 8-week MBSR course (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction). It is a wonderful experience, either in person or online.

Give these techniques a try- no risk, great potential benefit, minimal cost of time and money. Your brain, the rest of your body, and the people who associate with you will thank you.

There are numerous resources/teachers online and in many communities. How you begin and progress is up to you. Experiment with different teachers and practices. You will find the one (or more) that work for you. A proven way to make progress is to commit to increasing the time you set aside, even just 30 seconds here and there. I promise, it will be worth it.

Video and Audio Online Resources

Here are some personal recommendations to help you find guides/teachers/practices.

VIDEO

1. Cory Muscara:

- 5 minute practice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XV2MvdfiyDg>

- 15 minute practice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmN_2WZdSRs

2. Jon Kabat Zinn (originator of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction/MBSR):

- Take TWO minutes to listen to this: <https://www.mindful.org/jon-kabat-zinn-defining-mindfulness/>

- This page also has many links to articles and practices.

- 10 minute mindfulness practice: <https://vimeo.com/38582286>

- Overview of Mindfulness presented at Google Campus. 70 minute video, last 30-40 minutes is a mindfulness practice https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nwwKbM_vJc

3. Dr. Andrew Weil:

- 4-7-8 Breathing: <https://www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/breathing-exercises-4-7-8-breath/>

AUDIO

UCLA Mindful Awareness Resource Center offers in person and online courses, many are free, others with a fee. 3-19 minutes each, English and Spanish <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

Mindfulness is not just for adults! Children and teens can greatly benefit as well.

<https://www.mindful.org/a-mindful-breath-counting-practice-for-teens-and-tweens/>