



HOEM

# Mindfulness

WORKBOOK

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# Table of contents

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- 01 Introduction
- 02 Mindfulness Principles
- 03 Forms of Mindfulness (with exercises)
- 04 Mindfulness Tips
- 05 Mindfulness Plan
- 06 Additional Resources



# 01

## Introduction

So you've started this workbook and you're interested in learning a little more about mindfulness and how to build it into your everyday life. Let's start with what mindfulness really is. To practice mindfulness is to maintain a present-focused awareness on thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and our environment. It means focusing on the present moment without judgment, rather than being caught up in racing thoughts about the past or future. While mindfulness can mean practicing structured meditations, it doesn't have to. There are quick and small ways you can learn to practice mindfulness in each moment.

Mindfulness has many proven benefits. It has been shown to decrease anxiety, stress and burnout, improve sleep, mood, relationships and memory and promote creative thinking. Overall, mindfulness can help you manage all the crazy things life has to throw at you with more ease and lightness.

*Ready? Let's go!*



# 02 Mindfulness Principles

Before we get into the “hows” of mindfulness practice, we want to understand the underlying principles. These principles are the attitudes we want to strive to hold within our mindfulness practice. They were introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn, the creator of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

1. **Non-judgment:** Noticing thoughts, feelings and sensations without labeling them as good or bad. They are simply there!
2. **Beginner's Mind:** Being open and curious when approaching every situation. Treating each moment as new instead of making assumptions based on past experiences.
3. **Trust:** Trusting your instincts instead of getting lost in the noise of external expectations and pressures.
4. **Non-striving:** Rather than always anticipating the next thing coming, it is important to appreciate where you're at right now.
5. **Patience:** Being in the present moment rather than wishing the future would come quickly.
6. **Acceptance:** Accepting the present moment as it truly is. This does not mean we can't change things, but acceptance is the first step.
7. **Letting go:** Letting go of the situations we cannot change.





## Forms of Mindfulness

### *Observing the Present Moment*

The mindful skill of observing the present moment means directing your full attention to what your five senses are picking up. This helps shift your consciousness away from anxieties and thoughts related to the future or past and calms your nervous system. Try the 5-4-3-2-1 technique to start observing the present moment. Record what you notice below ... try to describe the details of what you are picking up on - even the subtle things you normally wouldn't notice are important.

**Name 5 things you can see**

A large, light gray rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for writing the five things you can see.

**Name 4 things you can hear**

A large, light gray rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for writing the four things you can hear.

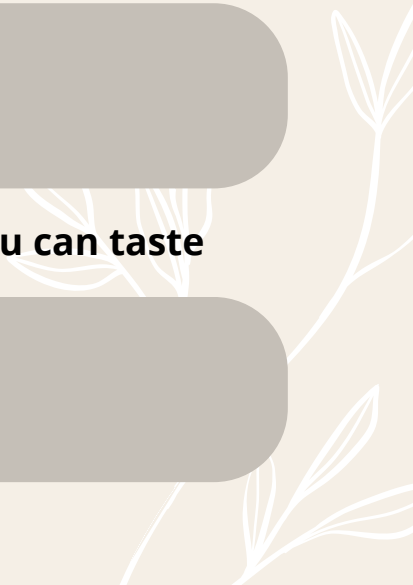
**Name 3 things you can feel**

A large, light gray rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for writing the three things you can feel.

**Name 2 things you can smell**

A large, light gray rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for writing the two things you can smell.

**Name 1 thing you can taste**

A large, light gray rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for writing the one thing you can taste.

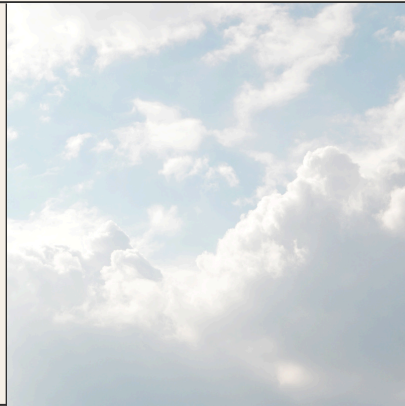
# Noticing Our Thoughts

Mindfulness provides us with tools for simply noticing our thoughts rather than becoming “fused” with them. The truth is that thoughts will come and go all day long, but this does not mean that our thoughts are true or that we have to take every thought seriously. Thoughts are not inherently good or bad. They are like pages written on water that we can simply watch come and go.

Try the following techniques (pulled from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) to start noticing your thoughts with gentle curiosity.

## Thoughts on clouds

Imagine placing each of your thoughts on a cloud. Watch your thoughts slowly come and go across the sky. Remind yourself that thoughts are just like clouds and often don't have as much substance as you may originally think.

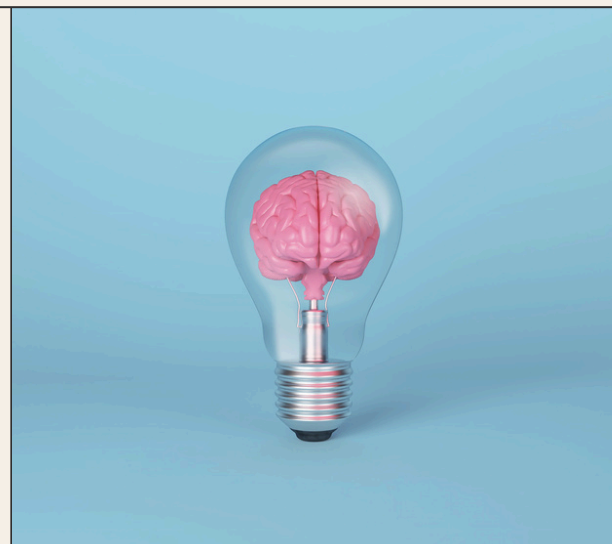


## Clicking the 'X' button

Thoughts can fill up your mind like popups on your computer! Imagine clicking the “x” button on thoughts as they pop up in your mind.

## “I am having the thought that ...”

When a distressing or upsetting thought pops into your head, try saying the phrase “I am having the thought that ...” before the thought itself. This helps create some space between you and the thought.



# Focusing on Breath

Attention to breath is one of the core practices in mindfulness, not only because it brings us in touch with the present moment, but also because it promotes calm and emotional regulation by quieting an active mind. Since we all know how to breathe, the breath is a good way to get started with your mindfulness practice. Try the exercises below to see which style of mindful breathing feels best for you.

## Mindful awareness of natural breath

Breathe naturally and focus on a physical sensation like your stomach rising and falling or air entering and exiting your nostrils. When your mind wanders (which it will) just gently bring it back to your breath. Do this for 2-3 minutes.

## Deep breathing

Instead of simply noticing our natural breath, here we want to breathe very deeply into the belly, then exhale all of the air in one long breath. This type of breathing helps relax the nervous system so you can enter a state of calm.

## Box breathing

The box breathing technique helps to promote a sense of grounded alertness. To do this, inhale for 4 seconds, then hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds ... and repeat!

## Energizing breath

If you are feeling low and tired, mindful breathing can help boost your energy. Inhale in 4 very quick, sharp and equal bits, then do one long exhale to release the air. Repeat this at least 3 - 4 times.





## Body Scanning

Body scan mindfulness involves paying attention to the sensations happening throughout your body in sequence. Because emotions live in our body, starting to become mindful of physical sensations can help us become aware of where tension is stored.

Try the following to practice a quick body scan:

1. Sit upright in a chair with your feet planted on the ground.
2. Take a few deep breaths to centre yourself.
3. Notice your feet touching the floor, the sensations in your feet and throughout your legs.
4. Notice your legs and back pressing against the chair and any other sensations that come up within them.
5. Focus your attention on your stomach and abdomen area. If there is tenseness or tightness, let it soften and take a deep breath.
6. Notice the sensations in your hands and arms. If your hands or shoulders are tight, allow them to soften.
7. Lastly, bring your attention to your throat, face and head. If your jaw is tight, allow it to soften.
8. Bring a gentle smile to your lips and take one more deep breath.





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## Visualization

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Visualization is a different type of mindfulness where you focus on a vivid and detailed image in your mind that you try to immerse yourself in. This practice can bring up feelings of calm and wellbeing while also giving you a single point to focus on, reducing mental distractions. You can try visualizing a peaceful scene, or a successful outcome in a specific area of your life in order to improve confidence.

### **Try the following visualization exercise called Calm Place:**

- Start by finding a quiet, peaceful place where you won't be disturbed. Sit in a position that feels relaxed and comfortable.
- Take a few deep breaths to reach a place of relaxation.
- Imagine a place where you feel safe and relaxed. This could be a real place you've been to, like the beach, or somewhere you create in your mind, like your dream home.
- Try to engage all your senses in this visualization. Consider what you might see, hear, smell, touch, and taste in your calm place.
- Allow yourself to feel completely at ease. Allow the feelings of safety and relaxation to completely fill your body and mind.
- When you're ready, slowly bring your awareness back to your physical surroundings. Wiggle your fingers and toes, take a few more deep breaths, then gently open your eyes.

Remember, you can return to this calm place when you need it. If you practice, you may start to automatically pull this place up in your mind when things get stressful or overwhelming.

# Participating Fully

The mindful skill of participating fully sounds simple, but it takes practice! It means placing all of your attention on exactly what you are doing in the moment, rather than your thoughts or emotions. We've included a couple ways to begin below.



**Mindful eating** is another daily activity where you can start your mindful participation journey. Begin by fully tuning into the sensations in your body that are telling you that you're hungry. Now bring your attention to the food item in your hand and notice what you can see and feel (colour, shape, size). Try to tap into a feeling of gratitude for what it took for that food item to be made its way to you. As you prepare to eat the food, notice the smell of it and any body sensations that arise while anticipating eating the food. Finally, take a small bite and focus completely on the flavour and texture as you eat it.

**Mindful Movement** is not just participating in activities like yoga and tai chi (although those can be great). You can start by simply going for a walk. As you walk, focus fully on the sensations of your legs moving, your feet on the ground, the sounds and sights of nature. Be present with each new step, rather than focusing on the destination.





# 04 Mindfulness Tips

Mindfulness is a skill you need to practice, just like anything else. But mindfulness is meant to bring ease into your life - not struggle. Here are some tips for getting started with ease.

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1. **Choose an activity you like:** There are so many ways to practice mindfulness, but not all of them are a good fit for everyone! If you want a mindfulness practice to stick, you have to be honest with yourself and only commit to practicing the activities that you truly enjoy.
2. **Set a consistent routine:** Experts agree that mindfulness has the greatest impact on health, stress relief and mood if it is practiced consistently. Find a time of day (even if it's 10 minutes) that you can commit to.
3. **Don't try to "get it right":** There is no right or wrong when it comes to mindfulness. It just *is*. If your mind is busy and wandering, that's ok. Just notice it without judgment. That is the true meaning of mindfulness.
4. **Build it into daily tasks:** Luckily, many of these practices can be built into your daily life. At school or work? Take a couple brief moments to breathe deeply or connect with the sensations in your body.
5. **Create a comfortable space:** If you create a little nook where you can practice, it will feel cozy and welcoming each time you sit down.



# 05 Mindfulness Routine

Think of your daily routine and how you might be able to easily build some mindfulness practices into your schedule. Note them below.

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING/NIGHT
MON			
TUE			
WED			
THU			
FRI			
SAT			
SUN			





# 06

## Additional Resources

There are so many amazing free resources that can help you start to build a bit of a mindfulness practice. Below are a few recommendations for free meditations, inspirational mantras, guided sleep exercises and more.

**1. Insight Timer App**

**2. Tara Brach's Podcast**

**3. Ten Percent Happier Podcast**

**4. Honest Guys YouTube Channel**

Wishing you all the best on your mindfulness journeys, HOEMies!

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