

When you pause and create time and space to be present, you trade perception for clarity, fear for gratefulness, and recklessness for wisdom. The best part of this is that mindfulness is as simple as breathing in and out.

Mastering mindfulness

So how does mindfulness work?

Perhaps you've heard of mindfulness: It's a trendy topic, but many people would be hard pressed to define it or explain how it applies to their everyday life. It's actually quite simple, though:

Mindfulness is paying attention to what's happening, to what you're doing, to what your surroundings are – right here, right now.

Mindfulness starts with being exactly where you are. While that might sound simple, it raises a couple of questions: Where are you physically? Where are your thoughts? Although you know your physical location – sitting in a chair, facing a computer screen and reading this article – your thoughts might be distracting you and placing you in the past or

fast-forwarding you into the future. So, while you are physically present, the truth is that the mind and the body are often in two different places at two different times (kind of like “Quantum Leap”). The difference is that this detachment keeps you from feelings of contentment, focus and clarity. Becoming more mindful empowers you to function through a lens of



awareness. When you're detached from the present, you are also detached from yourself. This often results in causing your present self to function on autopilot and keeps you from being fully aware of who you are and how you're responding to the world that flows around you. The mind wants to solve things, so when it is trying to deal with past events, it can cause you to feel blue. On the other hand, pivoting into the future where unknown factors drive thoughts can make you feel anxious. Considering your thoughts with the awareness of the present moment allows you to press pause on the mental jabber that is clouding your ability to be fully present.

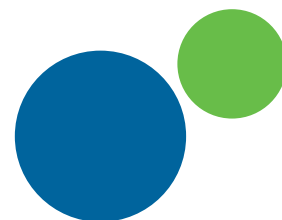
Establishing a mindfulness practice is as easy as connecting with your senses. People have been practicing mindfulness for thousands of years. Modern day scientists are seeing the benefits too. **You can start with a simple practice, setting aside three minutes of your day to connect with yourself.**

Eventually, you might want to create more time and space for this, moving to periods of five, 10 or even 30 minutes. No matter how much (or little) time you devote to practicing mindfulness, know that every second in which you are truly present is an accomplishment because your body and mind finally have the chance to work together.

Being present in the moment has some major mental benefits.

Practicing mindfulness can:

- **Reduce stress**
- **Soothe feelings of anxiety and depression**
- **Improve memory**
- **Enhance your ability to focus and make decisions**
- **Lower your blood pressure and strengthen your immune system**
- **Lead to more satisfying relationships**



Be present in the moment



No matter where you are or what you're doing, you have the right to stop, to breathe and to reconnect with your body, your mind and your heart.

Mindfulness in practice

1. Commit to connecting with your breath for at least three minutes every day.
2. Establish a specific time by setting a reminder.
3. Pause wherever you are and take a deep breath in and release it out naturally, then repeat for the next three minutes.
4. As you breathe in and out, make sure every part of your body is connected with your breath.
5. Notice how your body feels and what you're sensing: the breath in your chest and belly, the air surrounding your body, the sounds and smells around you.
6. Should thoughts arise, acknowledge them. Then allow them to drift away as if they are clouds passing across the sky.

CLICK THE LINK TO TAKE A QUIZ FOR PROOF OF COMPLETION:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CH6CFN6>

Just breathe

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