



Mindfulness



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01 ✨ Knowledge ✨

What is *mindfulness*? Why is it important?



“Whatever the *present moment* contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it.”

Eckhart Tolle



What is Mindfulness?

Definition

Mindfulness is a state of open awareness directed at what an individual is presently thinking, feeling, doing, and sensing.

- Has a profound impact on emotional and physical wellbeing
- Elevates other mental health skills, like *acceptance*

Key Aspects

Present Moment

The practice of *mindfulness* fosters the tools/capacity needed to stay in the present—a difficult feat!

Awareness

...of the senses is the foundation of *mindfulness*. Sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell can help ground oneself.



Where is Your Mind?



Past

- Embarrassed over something said or done two weeks ago
- Regretting a missed opportunity
- Replaying negative past experiences



Present

- Feeling the hot sun on your skin
- Smelling rich coffee in your cup
- Hearing sounds of nature in the park



Future

- Worrying about a future event to take place
- Imagining all the ways the future might turn out, the good and the bad
- Planning ahead

Where is Your Mind?

Mental Time Travel

There is nothing wrong with thinking about the past or the future—mental time travel is helpful for planning and growth! **The problem arises when we spend too much time in these mental spaces.**

- Excessive rumination or worry over past/future events can do more harm than good.
- Dwelling on the past/future forces one to miss out on the beauty of the present moment.



Balance

Mental Time Travel is useful, but people can get lost in the past/present. Balance the time you spend in your mind vs. experiencing the moment.



Practice

Mindfulness practice helps people to recognize when they've shifted attention to the past/future and how to redirect oneself back to the present.



02 ✨ Development ✨

Why is *mindfulness* an important skill to develop?



The Benefits of Mindfulness



Awareness

- Present awareness
- Improved focus
- Connection to the “inner self”
- Connection to others
- Connection to the environment



Emotion Control

- Emotional awareness
- Emotion regulation
- Reduced reactivity
- Increased empathy and engagement
- Improved relationships



Mindful Attitude

- Non-judgmental view of one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- Gratitude--an appreciation for the things that are usually taken for granted
- Greater life satisfaction



Mindfulness is Simple yet Effective

Mindfulness can be directly applied to daily living.

At its core, *mindfulness* is a mental strategy which helps people return to the present moment, regain control of their mind, and begin living more intentionally—any time!

Mindfulness can significantly impact overall well-being.

By practicing the skill of embracing the present, individuals free themselves from drifting into the past or future. This enriches the moment and increases engagement with those around you. This can positively impact self-esteem, relationships, focus, and much more!

Remember...

To let go of preconceived notions about *mindfulness*.

Everyone--from monks to medical doctors--can and do benefit from practicing *mindfulness*.

Adopting a Mindful Attitude

Myth of Mindfulness

***Mindfulness* and meditation are often conflated as the same practice.** People think of a peaceful yet time-consuming ritual when they hear these two terms. However, *mindfulness* is more than a practice encouraged by your yoga instructor.



Modern Mindfulness

***Mindfulness* is an everyday attitude!** It's the choice to have a more intentional, present lifestyle wherever you are (yoga, home, office, gym, etc.). It's choosing to engage with your present experience as often as possible and *accepting* your past/future stressors. It's freeing yourself from those nagging, unhelpful thoughts.



Take the time to discover how to best
integrate a **mindful mindset** into your life.

03



Practice



How is *mindfulness* practiced in daily life?

Four Steps to Mindfulness:





The Practice of Mindfulness

Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be practiced anytime, but the following activities aid in the development of mindfulness habits.

- a) Breathing Exercises
- b) The Five Senses or "Grounding"
- c) Emotional Awareness
- d) Integrating Acceptance

You don't have to use *all* these approaches at the same time, rather they come in handy during different scenarios!



It Takes Effort

Mindfulness is a conscious effort, but it will come naturally with practice.



It Gives Meaning

It's easy to find oneself drifting off in thought. **But when you are not fully present, you miss out on the meaningful experiences happening now!**



a) Breathing Exercises

Why Breathing?

Breathing exercises are among the most common and simple forms of *mindfulness* practice.

Whether sitting or standing, talking or listening, alone or in public, breathing exercises can be practiced without drawing much attention.

We breathe all the time, but *mindful* breathing incorporates intentional awareness!

Breathing exercises may focus on counting, feeling the breath, affirmations, the diaphragm, or something similar. Find what works best for you!

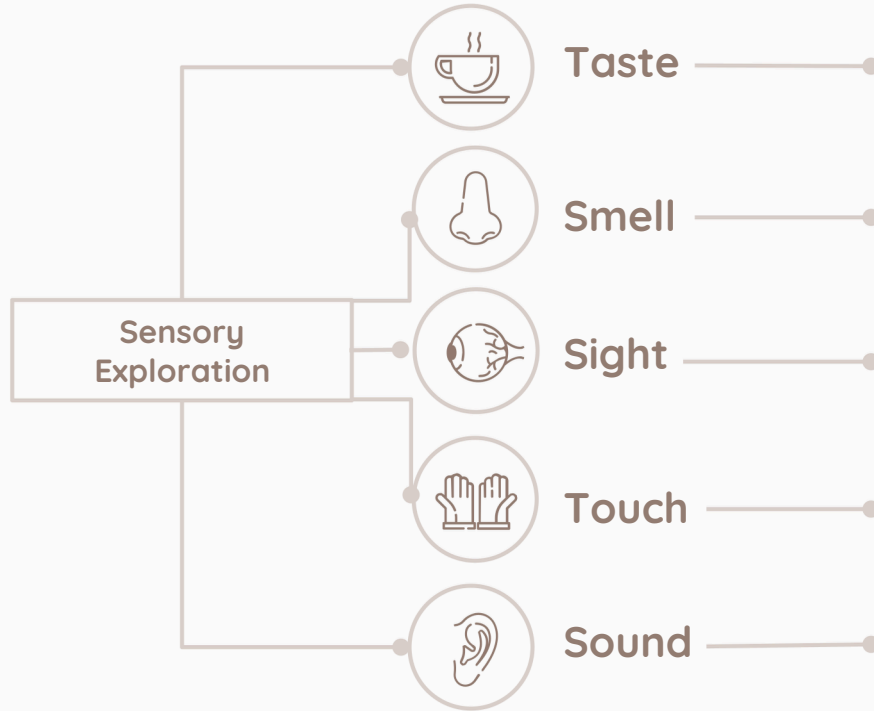
“Box Breathing”

Put all focus on your breath—clear your mind of other thoughts as best as possible. What do you feel, smell, taste, or hear as you are breathing?

- Inhale deeply (through nose) for 4 seconds
- Hold the breath in for 4 seconds
- Exhale slowly (through mouth) for 4 seconds

This 4-4-4 breathing technique helps to lower heart rate and induce calmness.

b) The Five Senses or “Grounding”



Focus on the meal you are eating or the gum you are chewing. Notice how many flavors you can taste. Are they sweet, sour, bitter, salty, or savory?

Pay attention to the meal in front of you or the environment you are in. Notice how many scents you can smell. Are they pleasant or unpleasant?

Look at your surroundings. Choose a common item or color, then count the other objects in that group (e.g. counting trees at the park).

Notice how your body feels as you sit, stand, or lie down. Reflect on how the surface supports your body. Are you comfortable or uncomfortable?

Count the number of different sounds you hear. Did you find any unusual sounds that you don't normally notice?



c) Emotional Awareness

Nonjudgmental Awareness

...of all our emotions is a key aspect of *mindfulness*.

We often experience difficult emotions that we avoid, reject, and invalidate due to...

- Fear of judgement from others
- Inability to cope with a painful emotion
- Harsh criticism of ourselves for feeling this way

However, ignoring negative emotions or thoughts does not eliminate them—they are still waiting to be processed!



Process Emotions

Don't let negative emotions pile up! Process each emotion as it comes or when it feels safe.



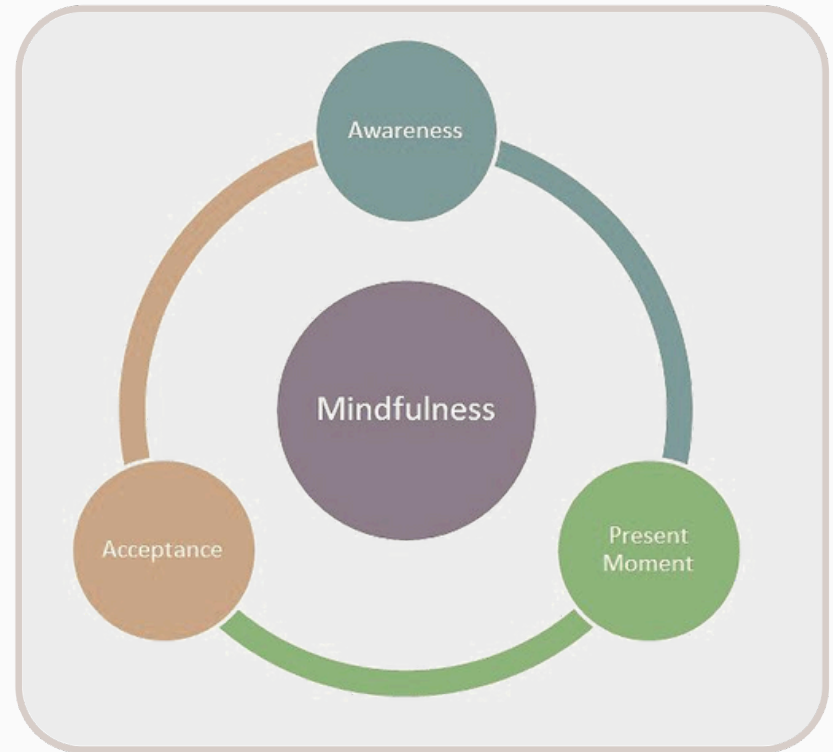
Practice Awareness

Emotional awareness is simple in concept: consistently “check in” on yourself and the emotion you’re feeling. Identify and accept it. Provide ample time/space to process it.

c) Integrating Acceptance

Acceptance—**acknowledging reality as it is, without changing or resisting it**—is another primary tool for improving mental health.

Mindfulness incorporates *acceptance*, alongside awareness and the present moment, to experience life with an open, welcoming mindset.





d) Integrating Acceptance



Mutual Positive Influence

The practice of *mindfulness* can lead to the development of *acceptance*. In turn, the practice of *acceptance* can improve the ability to remain *mindful*.



A Mighty Combination

When combined, *mindfulness* and *acceptance* contribute to emotional resilience, improved coping strategies, and a more balanced approach to wellbeing.



Integration of Skills

Positive mental health tools, such as *acceptance*, *mindfulness*, *boundaries*, and *effective communication*, can be used separately. However, an integration of skills is the end goal. “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts” when it comes to mental health strategies.



04 ✨ Conclusions ✨

What did we learn about *mindfulness* today?



Mindfulness

...is a simple yet effective practice that can enhance your day-to-day life.



Meaning

...is found when we connect with and remain fully invested in the present moment.



Mental Time Travel

...is normal, but living in the past/future is not sustainable.



Practice

...*mindfulness* by tethering yourself to your breath and senses. Process your emotions as they come & integrate compatible mental health strategies.

05 ✨ Resources ✨

Where can we learn more about *mindfulness*?



Practice, Practice, Practice!

Below are a few resources to help you learn about and begin practicing *mindfulness*.

Website	Palouse Mindfulness Free Online Course Dave Potter MBSR
Mobile App	Smiling Mind Free App Worry Tree: Anxiety and CBT Therapy
Podcast	Selection of Mindfulness Podcasts YouTube
Book	Wherever You Go, There You Are Jon Kabat-Zinn GoodReads
Journal Article	What Are the Benefits of Mindfulness? Davis & Hayes PSU
YouTube	Paying Attention & Mindfulness Sam Chase TEDxNYU