



# **MINDFULNESS**

DECREASE STRESS, INCREASE PERFORMANCE



# F.A.Q.S

## 1) How do I practice mindfulness?

See below for easy and fast techniques to try.

## 2) What if I don't have the time?

Mindfulness exercises can take as little as 5 minutes, or can be incorporated into activities you're already doing on a daily basis.

## 3) What if I don't have much privacy?

Mindfulness exercises can be done inconspicuously whether you're in public or in a private space.

## 4) I tried it before, it didn't work

Like any new skill, mindfulness takes time to learn and master. Try again! Or try a different exercise! New skills can take weeks if not months of regular practice. If you still find you're struggling to decrease stress or improve focus, try seeking other resources to ask for help.

# Mindfulness Exercises



Many mindfulness exercises can be done anytime anywhere. There are two primary goals: to focus on the present moment, and to accept any unpleasant thoughts or feelings without judgement.

When engaging in a mindfulness activity, try to focus on just what is going on around you using all five senses.

If your mind wanders, that's ok! That is completely normal. Just notice it and then try to pull your attention back to the exercise.

\*There are many mindfulness exercises out there. These just provide a sample and do not represent the only best options. Different exercises work best for different people.

# Exercise 1: Mindful Breathing



This exercise is a foundational skill that helps your body remain calm and focused when you want it to.

- 1) Sit comfortably - close your eyes if this feels right to you, otherwise you may stare at a distant spot. Your spine should be reasonably straight
- 2) Bring your attention to your breathing
- 3) Imagine that you have a balloon in your belly. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates.
- 4) Notice the sensations in your abdomen, rising and falling as the balloon inflates and deflates.
- 5) Thoughts or sounds will come to your mind, that's natural. Just notice those thoughts, don't judge yourself for having them, then bring your attention back to your breathing.
- 6) Focus on the air going in and out, the feel of your abdomen rising and falling.

## Exercise 2: Mindful Eating



This is a great exercise for beginners as it can be attempted with any kind of food, or even during your regular meal times.

To Start: Choose any type of small finger-food (or follow these steps with your regular meal). Candies, chocolates, raisins, or berries work well for this.

- 1) Pretend you've never seen this food before.
- 2) Pay careful attention to the way the food looks
- 3) Notice how the food feels in your hand, and how it responds to light pressure.
- 4) Note the food's smell
- 5) Put the food in your mouth and really savor and notice the taste.

## Exercise 3: The Body Scan



This exercise requires at least 10 minutes, but is good for those who want to focus on something tangible.

To Start: Lie on your back with palms facing up and feet slightly apart. Alternatively, sit in a comfortable chair with your feet resting on the floor.

- 1) Bring attention to your breathe, in and out.
  - 2) Next bring attention to your body, one part at a time. Notice the texture of clothing on skin, the surface you are resting on, temperature and environment, tingling, soreness, heaviness or lightness.
  - 3) Move systematically through the body, taking notice with each new area.
- Toes, feet, lower legs, knees, thighs, pelvic region, abdomen, chest, lower back, upper back, shoulders, hands, arms, neck, face and head.

## Exercise 4: The Five Senses



This exercise is quick and can be done in nearly any situation. All that is needed is to notice something you are experiencing with each of the five senses.

### 1) Notice five things that you can SEE

Look around you and bring your attention to give things that you can see. Pick something you don't normally notice like a shadow or crack in the concrete.

### 2) Notice four things that you can FEEL

Bring awareness to things you are currently feeling, like the texture of your clothes, a breeze, or the table you're resting on.

### 3) Notice three things you can HEAR

Take a moment and listen. Note three things you hear in the background.

### 4) Notice two things you can SMELL

Bring awareness to smells you usually filter out. Fast food across the street, pine trees, laundry soap.

### 5) Notice one thing you can TASTE

Focus on one thing you can taste. You can take a sip of a drink, eat something, or notice the taste of your mouth.



## Exercise 5: Everyday Activities

This exercise builds upon the 5 senses and is perfect for those who are strapped for time. It can be completed with any everyday simple activity like driving, showering, or eating.

To Start: Choose a simple, automatic, activity like driving or showering.

- 1) Bring your awareness to the visual input around you. What details do you usually not notice during this routine activity?
- 2) Notice the physical sensations around you. What does the water feel like as it hits you? What does the steering wheel feel like in your hands?
- 3) Notice any smells associated with the activity.
- 4) Notice the sounds around you. Are they pleasant? unpleasant?
- 5) Notice your emotional response. How do you feel? Release any judgment and return to focusing on the present moment.