

*For busy parents, career professionals, leaders, teens, and seniors.
Bringing mindfulness out of the yoga studio and into everyday life.*

Mindfulness in Everyday Life

*A practical guide to make
mindfulness work for you*



TARA NYLESE

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This book is dedicated to my loved ones, who have tirelessly supported me in bringing mindfulness to life. Thank you to my sweet Emma, for being my buddy in life, and to my dear Chris, for your never-ending support.

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| Preface

There's a day in my life that stands out for me. It was an early fall day, and my daughter was in fourth grade. I was rushing her to get ready for school, and it was one disaster after another. I kept yelling at her to hurry up, that she would miss the bus, and the whole day would fall apart. It certainly seemed like it would at the time. She had to make it onto the bus. I had to get to work. Sticking to my schedule was all that mattered in life. That was my truth at the time.

Luckily, my mom was at my home that day and doing a much better job handling her daughter than I was at handling mine. She patiently corrected me when I was mindlessly ruining my daughter's and my own day. She firmly said, "Tara, relax." You can imagine how that statement went over in my frantic state.

At the time, it felt like my life depended on getting my daughter on the bus. In reality, her school was only one mile away, and if she missed the bus, there would be almost no damage done. I alone created the damage by causing such a whirlwind, stressful morning.



Thankfully, I have the perspective to look back on that day with a different mindset. Ironically, I had just started taking a meditation class at the time. That, plus my mom's patient guidance, sent me down the path I'm on today.

I look back at times like that when I was certain I was dealing with all my busy and "important" activities in the best way. I just had to do everything; otherwise, the entire world would fall apart.

Wow! Was I wrong. I can say this because I lived that life, and I'm also living a beautifully less-stressed (not stress-free!) life now. I've seen the grass on both sides of the fence, and I have lived on both sides of the fence. No doubt, life is better when you effectively manage your stress. My life is better. My loved one's lives are better, and my relationships are much deeper and more genuine. I took significant steps in my career to reduce the difficulties around me. Amazingly, my life and success grew in so many ways!

It was a conscious decision that I'm so glad I made. My career has been focused as a scientist in the business world. After that fall day, I also became deeply involved with a worldwide meditation center where I learned many profound life lessons practiced for millennia.

I remember the first time chatting with someone from my meditation group, which included many New Yorkers, including Wall Street businesspeople and famous actors. This person was surprised that I was a scientist practicing meditation. To me, the association is so clear. Scientific practice is that when something works, you do more of it. You experiment until you find the right result. Meditation and mindfulness work the same way as experiments: adapting until you find your personal fit.

Early on, I remember being in class and the teacher discussing the "meditation break." I wondered what this meditation break was, and I was eagerly looking forward to coffee and cookies along with the break. As it turns out, the "meditation break" is actually life. It consists of the hours of the day when we are not formally practicing meditation, and if you don't meditate, then the break includes every hour of every day. "Meditation break" is also known as mindfulness. Mindfulness means having a purposeful focus on each

present moment **as we go about the activities of our daily lives.**

Over the last few years, my conviction that mindfulness belongs in the workplace has been further strengthened by the vast amount of scientific research on this topic. My favorite article on mindfulness is from *Harvard Business Review* titled, “Spending 10 Minutes a Day on Mindfulness Subtly Changes the Way You React to Everything.” I read this around the time when I received my meditation instructor certification. And thus, my mindfulness program Ten Minute Mindfulness was born.

It is my passion and honor to combine my career as a professional scientist with the practice of mindfulness, inspiring others to recognize that there is a place for mindfulness in their life. Mindfulness is accessible to all at every stage of life, no matter what your particular life situation is. My goal is to make your first steps a whole lot easier than mine were! Let’s get started on the path together.

| How to Use This Book

Practicing mindfulness is for everyone.

There are clear benefits of practicing mindfulness—whether you are a busy parent, career professional, leader, teenager, or senior citizen. For over two decades, scientific and medical research has explored and confirmed the benefits of mindfulness. In short, no matter who you are, you will benefit from engaging in a more mindful life, and you can get started with just a small amount of guidance.

This book is a practical guide to inspire you to build your mindfulness practice and bring it into your everyday life. The approach aims to bring mindfulness out of the yoga studio and into daily life, dusting away any stigmas or preconceptions.

This book starts by sharing the benefits for everyone and then uses practical suggestions to help you get started in as little as ten minutes per day. The approach is interactive, including guided mindfulness sessions on my website at www.TenMinuteMindfulness.com. When you use the links in this book, you'll get exclusive access to videos. These videos will help you quickly and easily start a routine, and anyone can find the perfect content for themselves.

At the end of each chapter is a ten minute mindfulness practice you can do independently. Start by reading the passage and reflecting on the general idea. The passage typically instructs you to sit or lie down, relax various parts of your body, and then turn your mind toward a particular concept and series of thoughts. After gaining an understanding of the exercise, you can begin to practice it in small amounts by reading a portion, then practicing it, and

then reading the next step. You can also record yourself speaking the training, then listen to it. Finally, you can go to the website and find that practice recorded for you, paired with relaxing music. Ultimately, you decide which path works best for you, then choose that as your starting point.

Each of the chapters explores various aspects of life, and you may want to spend more time on the chapters that are most applicable to your circumstances. You'll learn more about the causes of various disturbances to your everyday life and then read the grounded-in-science rationale, demonstrating how mindfulness can give you the patience and wisdom to improve each situation. Finally, the end of each chapter contains a related mindfulness practice, which will give you a practical approach to enhancing your life on that topic. Again, you can also link to the website to get a guided mindfulness practice regarding that theme.

Remember that each day is a new opportunity to grow your life in the direction you're seeking to expand. Whether your goal is practicing mindfulness, relaxation, career success, relationship success, or stress relief, mental and emotional wellness will bring you tremendous benefits. Even if it's just a little step in the right direction each day, keep at it, adjust when needed, and blossom into the life you want!

1 | What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness has gained much popularity in recent years, but what exactly is mindfulness? Mindfulness is a state of mind that involves being present and fully engaged in the present moment without judgment or distraction. It is the act of being genuinely aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings and accepting the richness of each present moment in your life.

At its core, mindfulness is about paying attention to what is happening moment by moment, with openness and curiosity, rather than getting lost in thoughts about the past or worries about the future. It can involve paying attention to your breath, your body sensations, or the environment around you.

Mindfulness is also a practice in that it's a way of training your mind to be more aware and present in the current moment, rather than being caught up in nonproductive thoughts or excessive emotion. While mindfulness is often associated with meditation, it is not limited to formal meditation practice. Mindfulness can be practiced at any moment of the day, whether washing dishes, walking, or even sitting at your desk.

One of the key elements of mindfulness is *nonjudgment*. Rather than evaluating your thoughts or experiences as good or bad, right or wrong, mindfulness involves simply observing them without judgment or criticism. Something as simple as this can help reduce your stress and anxiety levels and increase feelings of calm and contentment.

Another important element of mindfulness is *acceptance*. Rather than obsessing over things you can't control or

reacting overly emotionally to something you can, mindfulness involves a realistic amount of acceptance. You don't need to deny your experiences; instead, allow your experiences to unfold. This is beneficial in dealing with difficult emotions or challenging situations because it allows you to approach them with greater clarity and calmness. Mindfulness is possible even when life is difficult; in fact, this might be when it is most beneficial. Emotions rise during challenging circumstances. When you can employ mindfulness and call upon a clear mind to act upon a solution, your results will be far superior to actions clouded by emotional reactions.

Research has shown that practicing mindfulness can have notable benefits for mental and physical health. For example, studies show that mindfulness is associated with a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety, improved sleep quality, and lower levels of stress.¹ It can also improve cognitive function and increase feelings of well-being. There are also physical health benefits, including reducing symptoms of chronic pain² and lowering blood pressure. According to a study presented at the American Heart Association Session in 2022, “Adults with elevated blood pressure who participated in a mindfulness behavior program for eight weeks had significantly lower blood pressure levels and greatly reduced sedentary time when evaluated at six months follow-up.”³

Mindfulness is proven as a powerful tool for cultivating greater awareness, presence, and resilience in facing life's challenges. Whether through formal meditation practice or simply paying attention to the present moment throughout the day, mindfulness can help you to live with greater ease, joy, and connection to the world around you.

Why Practice Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is an easy yet powerful practice that has been shown to have a wide range of benefits for mental and physical health. Practices can be done in as little as ten minutes daily and require little experience, preparation, or special considerations. Audios and videos of guided mindfulness meditations are one of the easiest ways to help you build a routine. You can achieve a variety of health benefits with a short and consistent daily mindfulness routine. The following list details seven benefits of mindfulness backed by science:

Reduce stress and anxiety: One of the most well-known benefits of mindfulness is its ability to reduce stress and anxiety. Regular mindfulness practice can help you become more aware of your thoughts and emotions and develop a mindful buffer from them, which can reduce the impact of stress and anxiety on your daily life. When you use mindfulness to consciously shift out of your body's stress mode, you reduce your stress hormones and put yourself in the driver's seat to make well-thought-out decisions.

Improve mood: Mindfulness can help you improve your mood and increase your feelings of well-being. From this vantage point, it's easier to focus on the positive aspects of your life, gently steering you to become fully present and engaged in the current moment. This dismantles the tendency to live life on autopilot. It's not to say that being mindful means ignoring negative thoughts; it simply helps you avoid being swept away by or overly fixated on them. Finding a healthy balance lets you control what you can control and let go of what you cannot influence.

Enhance cognitive function:

Mindfulness has been shown to enhance cognitive function, including improved attention, memory, and decision-making abilities. This may be because mindfulness helps to reduce the impact of distracting thoughts and emotions, allowing us to focus better on the task at hand. When you reduce your mental brain chatter, you can hear the faint insights of creative thoughts and solutions.

When you consciously shift from stress mode, you reduce your stress hormones and put yourself in the driver's seat to make well-thought-out decisions.

Reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression: Studies show that mindfulness-based routines effectively reduce symptoms of depression, including improving mood and increasing feelings of well-being. A study comparing an eight-week mindfulness program to a common anti-anxiety medication shows that the mindfulness program is equally effective at reducing anxiety compared to taking the anti-anxiety pill.⁴ And yet, the mindfulness program does not have the side effects of medication. If you feel you're suffering from anxiety or depression, seek professional help and consider a mindfulness-based routine to alleviate your symptoms.

Improve physical health: Mindfulness can also positively impact physical health. For example, studies show mindfulness may reduce chronic pain symptoms, lower blood pressure, and improve sleep quality. An exhaustive review published in the *National Library of Medicine* reports, "Mindfulness meditation is a technique that has been found to significantly reduce pain in experimental and clinical settings."⁵ Likewise, clients using guided sleep mindfulness sessions report significant sleep improvements, especially when they want to avoid sleep medication: "I didn't take

anything to sleep as I wanted to hear if mum needed me. Woke up but no panic—for the first time in months.”⁶

Enhance relationships: Mindfulness can help you to be more fully present and engaged in your relationships with partners, friends, and family, leading to improved communication and greater empathy and understanding. Mindfulness also strengthens emotional intelligence by allowing us to be more self-aware, which leads to greater social awareness with others.

Promote self-awareness and self-acceptance: Mindfulness can help you become more aware of your thoughts and emotions and to develop greater self-acceptance and self-compassion. It can lead to improved self-esteem and a greater sense of well-being. Mindfulness can be a helpful tool for self-acceptance because it encourages nonjudgmental awareness of emotions and experiences in the present moment. By cultivating a nonjudgmental attitude, you can learn to observe and accept your thoughts and emotions without getting caught up in self-criticism or negative self-talk. Mindfulness practices can also help you develop a greater sense of inner peace and calm, which can make it easier to accept yourself just as you are, rather than constantly striving for perfection or comparing yourself to others. With greater self-awareness, you can confidently align with your strengths to achieve more remarkable outcomes in life situations. Overall, mindfulness is a powerful practice that can have a wide range of benefits for both mental and physical health. Whether you want to reduce stress and anxiety, improve cognitive function, or enhance your

relationships, mindfulness can be a valuable tool for achieving your goals.

Who Can Practice Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a practice that can be beneficial for anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background. It is a simple

Mindfulness will help you become more aware of your thoughts and emotions.

With greater self-awareness, you can confidently align with your strengths to achieve more remarkable outcomes in life situations.

practice that can be integrated into daily life and requires no special equipment or training. Mindfulness does not necessarily have a religious or spiritual component, but it can be woven into one's spiritual journey if desired. The beauty of this practice is that it scientifically supports the mind and body—regardless of one's religious beliefs, or lack thereof—and many new practices are rooted in science and medicine. The following groups of people may benefit from practicing mindfulness:

- *Individuals experiencing stress and anxiety:* Mindfulness can help to reduce the impact of negative thoughts and emotions and assist in developing a greater sense of calm and relaxation.
- *Children and adolescents:* Mindfulness can help them develop greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience.

- *Older adults:* Mindfulness can assist in maintaining cognitive function, improving mood, and reducing feelings of isolation.
- *Individuals with mental health conditions:* Mindfulness-based practices are proven effective in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
- *Individuals with chronic pain:* Mindfulness can effectively reduce symptoms of chronic pain and help sufferers develop a greater sense of self-acceptance and self-compassion.
- *Individuals in high-pressure or demanding professions:* Mindfulness can be particularly helpful to healthcare workers, first responders, or executives by helping to reduce stress and burnout and to develop greater resilience and emotional regulation. An article in the *Harvard Business Review* notes, “Leaders across the globe feel that the unprecedented busyness of modern-day leadership makes them more reactive and less proactive. There is a solution to this hardwired, reactionary leadership approach: mindfulness.”⁷ The article further comments that “spending just ten minutes on mindfulness daily will subtly change how you react to anything.”

Anyone motivated to create a better life for themselves can cultivate a practice and gain benefits. The only limitations to who can benefit from a thoughtful and balanced life are self-limiting beliefs that you impose on yourself. Whether you want to reduce stress and anxiety, improve mental health, or enhance your overall well-being, mindfulness can be a valuable tool for achieving your goals.

How To Practice Mindfulness

You can practice mindfulness in a variety of either informal or formal ways. Informal mindfulness practices include guided videos, simple breathing exercises, reminders to stay present throughout your day, or even mindful eating and mindful walking. A mindfulness coach can help you create a personalized routine based on your situation, strengths, and needs. Formal practices include structured meditation practice, online or in-person classes with a teacher, and dedicated retreats. Many mindfulness-based interventions have been developed for specific mental health issues, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT).

It is essential to make your mindfulness routine a simple practice that can be integrated into daily life, using a variety of methods. Here are some steps you can follow to build a lasting routine:

1. *Find a quiet and comfortable space:* To practice mindfulness, find a quiet and comfortable space where you can sit or lie down without being disturbed. You can also practice mindfulness while walking or engaging in other daily activities, but it's often easier to start with a dedicated practice time.
2. *Focus on your breath:* Once you're in a comfortable position, close your eyes and focus your attention on your breath. Notice the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves your body without trying to change it in any way.
3. *Notice your thoughts and emotions:* As you focus on your breath, you may notice thoughts and emotions arise. Instead of getting caught up in them, simply observe them without judgment, and allow them to pass by like clouds in the sky.

4. *Return to your breath:* Whenever you notice your mind wandering, bring your attention back to your breath. This may happen many times during a single practice session, which is okay. Each time you return your attention to your breath, you're strengthening your mindfulness muscle.
5. *Practice regularly:* It is important to practice regularly to experience the full benefits of mindfulness. Start with a few minutes a day and gradually increase the time as you become more comfortable with the practice.
6. *Use guided mindfulness sessions to create variety:* There are many different areas to focus on, such as general relaxation, cultivating gratitude, reducing anxiety, and improving sleep. A quality guided session will help you hone in on the areas that are most important to you.
7. *Practice mindfulness throughout the day:* In addition to dedicated practice time, try to bring mindfulness into your daily life. You can do this by paying attention to your breath while waiting in line, focusing on your senses as you eat your meals, or taking a few deep breaths whenever you feel stressed or anxious.
8. *Work with a coach:* Once you've started your basic routine, you may want to attend a class or work with a certified mindfulness coach to tailor a program to your needs and interests. Your coach will also ensure you create healthy routines and stay on track by cultivating lifelong habits.

Integrating mindfulness into your daily life through simple practices eventually leads to long-standing habits over time that bring tremendous physical and emotional benefits for a better life. By focusing on your breath, observing your thoughts and emotions without judgment, and practicing regularly, you can develop greater mindfulness and experience the many benefits of this practice.

Summary

Mindfulness is now common in everyday life. No longer is it relegated to yoga studios; it's now practiced at home and in the workplace.

Anyone can practice and benefit from mindfulness, from busy people and parents to career professionals, children, teenagers, and senior citizens.

There are a range of physical and emotional benefits, from stress reduction to managing anxiety and lowering blood pressure.

Even with no experience, it's easy to create a mindfulness routine with simple tools like guided videos and ten-minute daily practices.

A mindfulness coach will help you create a personalized routine based on your situation, strengths, and needs.

Introduction to Mindfulness Practice

Here's a Ten Minute Mindfulness body scan practice that you can do in a seated position.

- Find a comfortable chair and sit, making sure that your body is supported. Rest your arms to your sides, placing your hands in your lap if it's more comfortable. Ensure that your feet can touch the floor. In this practice, you will bring your attention to various areas of your body. When you do, simply observe them, notice any feelings, and then move on to the next area.
- Close your eyes and take three deep breaths in and out of your nose, if possible. Then, simply begin to breathe normally.
- Bring your attention to the top of your head, now your forehead, next your eyes, your cheeks, your mouth, and your jaw. Relax your jaw and release any muscle tension.
- Bring your attention to your shoulders, then relax and drop them. Pay attention first to your right arm, now to your left arm. Continue moving down your body; notice your chest and how it moves as you inhale and exhale. Focus on your belly: soften your belly and relax more deeply.
- Now notice how you're seated on the chair and where your bottom is making contact with the chair. Bring your attention to your right leg and then your left leg. Your right foot and then your left foot.

- As you inhale, feel deeply relaxed; as you exhale, release any muscle tightness that you may still be holding onto. Inhale again, and feel comfortable, then exhale any stress.
- Now bring your attention to the entire right side of your body. Breathe in and out a few times as you focus on one side. Now, bring your attention to your left side. Again, breathe a few times, only focusing on one side of your body. Now bring your attention to the entire front side of your body. Pause for a few moments and then bring your attention to the back side of your body.
- Finally, inhale and focus on your whole body together. Again, exhale any muscle tightness that you still are holding on to. Inhale and feel your whole body together, exactly how it's meant to be, and exhale any difficulty. Breathe in and out a few more times, feeling the completeness of your body and your mind all together. When you're ready, gently open your eyes and stretch out any areas of your body.

Access guided introduction to mindfulness practices here:

[Book Guided Sessions | TenMinuteMindfulness](#)

PART 1

2 | Mindfulness for Busy People & Parents

As a busy parent, it can be challenging to stay present in the moment and manage the many demands of modern life. When juggling work, family, and other responsibilities, getting caught up in a cycle of stress and distraction happens quickly. The stress of parenting can deplete your energy and keep you from focusing on the important moments of your growing children's lives. It can also distract you from being the kind of person and parent you strive to be.

Mindfulness can be particularly useful in cultivating greater awareness and calm, even amid chaos. It'll help you experience the richness of the little moments, keep you engaged and energized, and also allow you to imprint the moments you'll cherish forever. Remember, without inner peace, outer peace is impossible.

*Without inner
peace, outer
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impossible.*

Even the busiest people can learn to be more present and focused by incorporating mindfulness into their busy schedules. Here's how you can begin building your routine.

Start with small moments of mindfulness. There's no need to start by setting aside a large block of time for mindfulness practice if you've never practiced mindfulness before. Your training will be more sustainable if you incorporate small moments of meaningful attention throughout your day. Simply take a few deep breaths before picking up your child from school, or focus on pleasurable sensations, such as the warm water on your hands as you

wash the dishes. You'll increase your enjoyment and chances for success when you start with just a few minutes daily and gradually work your way up.

Keep an eye out for moments throughout the day when you can take a few deep breaths or tune in to your surroundings. These mindful moments include waiting in line, sitting in traffic, or making lunches. You only need to set aside dedicated time for mindfulness if you have it. You'll find it easy to do when you make a special effort to find moments to practice. Wake up each morning, plan for these moments during the day, and set reminders to help ensure they happen.

Focus on the present moment: Instead of worrying about the future or ruminating on the past, focus on the precious details with your children as they occur. Notice the sights, sounds, and sensations around you, and bring your attention back to the present whenever your mind wanders. If your child notices a beautiful bluebird out the window and squeals with delight as it flaps by, absorb each moment and imprint the feelings in your memory of your time together.

On a similar note, focus on one task at a time. Multitasking may seem like the most efficient way to get things done, but it can be more stressful and less effective. Our brains are not optimized to conduct several different activities at once. Therefore multitasking leads to lower-quality results in whatever you're trying to accomplish.

Multitasking is a tough habit to break because many of us believe that this is how we must live our lives to get everything done. Some people may also wear this as a badge of honor, thinking they're more capable by juggling a lot. In reality, they're just more uncontrollably stressed. Instead of trying to do too many things at once (and none of them very

well), focus on one task at a time, giving it your full attention and energy.

Use mindfulness to connect deeply with your children.

Your children and future self will thank you for creating more profound and richer experiences. For example, if your child is trying to get your attention when you're busy doing chores, take a few moments to fully stop doing your task and give them your undivided attention, looking them in the eye and verbally acknowledging and supporting what they're communicating to you. Living in this manner will ensure you make the most of your valuable and quickly passing parenting time. It will also solidify the details, which create everlasting memories of small, meaningful moments.

Try practicing mindfulness exercises together, such as taking a mindful walk or doing a body scan meditation. While you walk, notice the small things just like a child would admire them: the excitement of seeing a squirrel running up a tree, the colorful details of a butterfly, or even the first buds of spring. Point these things out, ask your child how they feel seeing them, notice what emotions arise, and imprint them into your mind and body.

Continue to notice your surroundings, inhale the fresh air, allow yourself to smile, and exhale away any mental to-do lists that try to creep into your mindful time. Permit yourself to relax in the process, and do so with intention. When you focus on the present moment with your family, your body benefits from the reduced stress, and your mind becomes clearer with meaningful experiences.

Likewise, doing a mindful body scan is a constructive way to calm an impatient child or soothe an anxious teenager's nerves. They will cherish quality time with you, and you'll both benefit from this relaxing technique. Mindfully connecting can be as simple as

starting a guided mindfulness session together. You can even make it into a game by calling out various areas of your child's body for them to absorb and follow along. However, be aware that you should never use these practices as a punishment or a substitute for a "time out," as this creates mixed and inappropriate signals. At the same time, when you adopt a childlike attitude, you'll be naturally releasing stress by being absorbed in playful behavior. Use these practices before you need them to avoid reprimanding your children altogether! You'll also regain your cool and avoid getting into an argument.

Use guided sessions to practice. When you first begin, you may need guidance on how to get started—and for good reason! If you get off to a rocky start, you might want to quit. Thus, creating suitable routines that you'll enjoy is crucial,

Doing a mindful body scan is a constructive way to calm an impatient child or soothe an anxious teenager's nerves. They will cherish quality time with you, and you'll both benefit from this relaxing technique.

making it easier to create a habit. You'll also want to ensure you know a few basics, making it easier for you. For example, during meditation sessions, it's important to have the proper form so that your body will remain comfortable and not become a distraction as you go through your session.

There are a variety of live classes and recorded guided sessions for different purposes. An introduction to mindfulness session will help you use the best form and learn the basics of breathing during practice. There are also sessions for dealing with distracting thoughts and anxiety and promoting healthy sleep. You can find information online and through subscriptions, for example, at tenminutemindfulness.com.

Be patient with yourself and practice self-compassion.

Mindfulness is a skill; like any skill, it takes time to develop. Don't get discouraged if you find it challenging at first; keep practicing, and you'll eventually start to see the benefits. It's also a good idea to create a sustainable, enjoyable routine that works for you. If you're having a difficult time with guided meditation sessions, finding a mindfulness coach who can work with your specific situation and needs might be the best next step to keep you on your path.

Being a parent is hard work, and sometimes, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated. Practicing self-compassion can help you be kinder and more understanding toward yourself, making it easier to be present and engaged with your family. Like the airplane analogy, you must put on your oxygen mask before you help others put theirs on. If you're running on fumes, you won't have the energy or mindset to be beneficial to others.

It's also important to realize that self-care is not selfish. We may sometimes want to deny ourselves any alone time,

thinking it's far nobler to overextend ourselves. But that mindset cannot be everlasting. Eventually, it reaches a critical limit, and you'll reach your breaking point. It's important to have boundaries, but instilling the proper boundaries is key. Don't be selfish, and don't only think of yourself. Likewise, don't only think of the other person. Go ahead and have a bit of that chocolate cake, but don't eat the whole thing!

Make mindfulness a regular part of your routine. Like any habit, the key to incorporating mindfulness into your life as a busy parent is to make it a way of life. Set aside a specific time each day to practice mindfulness, and stick with it as consistently as possible. Over time, being present and mindful in your daily life will become more attainable and natural.

Incorporating mindfulness into your everyday life can reduce stress, increase focus, and improve your overall well-being. As a busy parent, you'll likely find these benefits valuable to help you get through difficult days and challenging encounters.

Summary

Living a mindful life will help you be the best person and parent you can be.

Focusing on the details of each moment and staying present will deepen your relationship with your family and strengthen your memories of special moments for the future.

Find short moments each day to casually practice rather than structuring large chunks of time. Set your plan for several mindful moments each morning, and create reminders so you stay on track.

Practicing a body scan with your children is a great way to hit the reset button for yourself and them. Additionally, it will create lifelong healthy habits.

A brief ten-minute practice you can do with your children at any time of the day

- Find a comfortable spot where you and your child can lie down next to each other. Gently rest your hands to your sides and breathe normally while you walk through this session. Have your child close his or her eyes as you share this time together.
- Ask your child to listen for any sounds in the distance. These sounds can come from outside, such as birds chirping or cars on the road. Spend a moment listening for sounds in the distance.
- Now turn your attention closer to you and notice any sounds in the room around you. Do you hear any clocks? Any humming? Any other noises in the room? Spend a moment with your eyes closed, listening for any sounds around you.
- Bring your attention to your body. Do you hear any sounds coming from your body? The sounds of yourself breathing, or maybe a sound from your belly? Spend a moment focusing on the lovely sounds coming from your body.
- Now pay attention to your breathing for a minute. How does it feel when you breathe in and out? Do you notice your breath? Do you hear it? It's time to bring your attention to different parts of your body. You don't need to move these areas, just keep your eyes closed and think of each area in your mind.

- Now think about your feet. Do you notice any feelings in your feet, either good feelings or bad feelings? Just observe them for a moment, then let go and pay attention to your legs resting on the bed beneath you. Breathe in and out and focus on your legs. Now focus on your hips and bottom, again touching the bed beneath you. Do you feel heavy there? Safe and secure? Now think of your lower belly. How does your belly feel? Next, move your attention up to your chest. Breathe in and out and notice how your chest moves as you breathe. Focus your attention on your chest as you feel the beautiful sensation of breathing. Spend a few moments focusing your thoughts on your chest and breathing, and try to relax and enjoy this sensation. Now move to your neck and your chin. Bring your attention to your face. Again, breathe in and out, noticing your breath as you continue to breathe normally.
- Now imagine your whole body, and keep paying attention. Do you feel lighter, comfortable, or happy? Put your hands on your heart and continue breathing in and out normally as you pay attention to your heart. How do you feel when you focus on your heart? Do you feel love, safety, peaceful? Breathe in and out a few more times, noticing how you feel in your heart.
- Next, think of one of your favorite times. This could be at the playground, or cuddling in bed with your parents, or relaxing with a pet. Think about your favorite thing to do. While thinking of your enjoyable activity, bring your attention back to your heart. How does your heart feel when you think about your favorite activity? Does your heart feel like it's growing when you focus on your enjoyable time? Notice any pleasant feelings of peace, love, or enjoyment. Spend a few more

moments thinking of your favorite activity and noticing any feelings that arise in your heart. Remember that you can feel those feelings in your heart at any time.

- Now open your eyes and share your experiences about the good feelings that you felt in your heart. Don't move around too quickly, enjoy a feeling of calmness when you share.

Access guided introduction to mindfulness practices here:

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3 | Mindfulness at Work

In today's fast-paced and often stressful work environment, mindfulness has become an increasingly popular technique for staying focused, productive, and mentally healthy.

Mindfulness at work involves being present in the moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings, and able to respond to any situation with clarity and intention.

Gallup, Inc. recently conducted a meta-analysis survey of over 1.8 million employees in 230 organizations across 49 industries, yielding extraordinary insights into the business results of a mentally and emotionally healthy workplace.¹ Notably, the results show that an engaged workforce drives 21 percent higher profitability, 17 percent higher productivity, 10 percent higher customer ratings, 41 percent lower absenteeism, 59 percent less turnover, and 70 percent fewer safety issues.

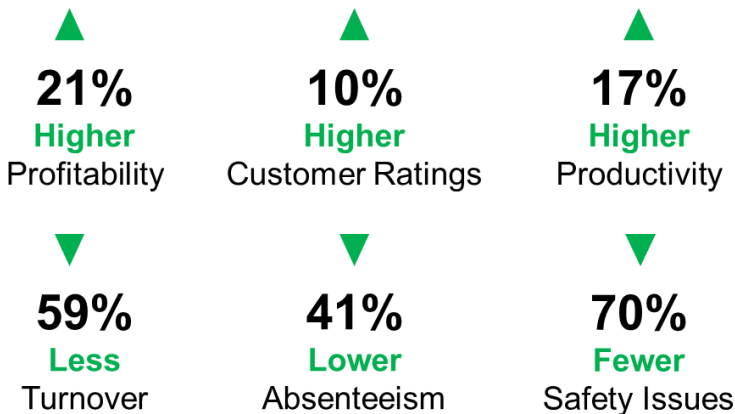


Figure 1 shows the results from a 2019 Gallup Inc. meta-analysis determining the Effect of Engagement on Key Business Outcomes.

How Mindfulness Improves Workplace Performance

Increase mental focus to achieve better results. One of the primary benefits of mindfulness at work is increased focus and productivity. When fully present and engaged in a task, you can better concentrate and complete your job efficiently. Greater focus helps you create a higher quality of work with greater creativity

and more insightful information. Being absorbed in your activity leads to the feeling of being “in the flow” at work, which positive psychology describes as one of the five core factors in happiness and well-being (we’ll explore this more in chapter 11). These attributes can lead to greater feelings of accomplishment and

satisfaction and reduced stress and anxiety when conducting your day-to-day tasks.

One of the primary benefits of mindfulness at work is increased focus and productivity. When fully present and engaged in a task, you can better concentrate and complete your job efficiently.

Make more thoughtful decisions. Another notable benefit of mindfulness at work is improved decision-making. By cultivating an awareness of your thoughts and emotions, you can learn to respond to situations with greater clarity and wisdom. Clear focus can help you make better choices and avoid impulsive or reactive decisions. Mindfulness changes how our brains function by shifting activity from the limbic system, or the “reptilian brain,” to the prefrontal cortex, the executive decision-making region of our brains. While our thinking will still be instantaneous, it will be more controlled and calculating, leading to increased performance.

Improve teamwork and generate superior results. In addition to these benefits, mindfulness at work can also improve communication and collaboration. You can develop deeper connections and build stronger relationships by being fully present and attentive to your colleagues. Team support can lead to greater cooperation and a more positive work environment. Conversely, difficulties with colleagues at the office can be one of the most destructive and stressful aspects of our job. With genuine patience and acceptance of others, we're more likely to put our differences aside and generate mutually acceptable solutions to difficulties. Also, a mindful view leads to a greater diversity of thought by being open to different perspectives, ultimately creating a more robust outcome for team assignments and projects.

Strategies to Cultivate Mindfulness in the Workplace

1. Practice mindfulness meditation, which involves focusing your attention on your breath and observing your thoughts and sensations without judgment. Meditation can help you develop greater self-awareness and reduce stress and anxiety.
2. Take regular breaks throughout the day to check in with yourself and refocus your attention. Breaks could involve taking a brief walk outside, practicing a few minutes of deep breathing, or simply closing your eyes and tuning in to your thoughts and feelings.
3. Prioritize self-care and stress management in your daily routine. Management could include regular exercise, healthy eating habits, and getting enough sleep. By taking care of your physical and mental

health, you can more effectively handle the demands of your job and maintain a positive, mindful mindset.

In conclusion, mindfulness at work is a powerful tool for increasing productivity, improving decision-making, and cultivating positive relationships with colleagues. By practicing mindfulness techniques and prioritizing self-care, you can develop a more mindful approach to your work and enjoy fulfilling success and satisfaction in your career.

How to Deal with Difficult Colleagues

We've all experienced the distress and personal challenges of dealing with difficult coworkers we cannot seem to get along with. It can be a significant source of stress and frustration in and out of the workplace. It can also negatively affect your mental health and productivity in the office. However, mindfulness techniques can be valuable tools for managing these challenging situations. There are some effective strategies for using mindfulness to deal with difficult coworkers.

Practice self-awareness: Mindfulness begins with awareness of your thoughts and emotions. When dealing with a problematic coworker, take a moment to check in with yourself and observe how you are feeling. A brief pause can help you recognize when you are becoming reactive or emotional, allowing you to respond more mindfully. When you notice these reactive feelings arise, take a breath to prevent further escalation. Exhale deeply away any negative emotions, inhale deeply, and shift to productive thinking. Then respond constructively.

Listen actively: One of the fundamental principles of mindfulness is being fully present and attentive to the

situation at hand. When dealing with an unagreeable coworker, practice active listening by giving them your full attention and focusing on what they are saying. Avoid planning what you will say or getting your point in before they finish speaking. Give coworkers your respect by listening without interruption and being open to their perspective. Start your reply by acknowledging what they've said, then choose your words from a place of common ground, no matter how small an act it may seem. They will notice your attentiveness and, in return, will feel more valued and less likely to be defensive or triggered. Overall, this strategy can defuse the situation before it gets heated.

Respond rather than react: Mindfulness involves responding to situations with intention and understanding rather than reacting impulsively.

When dealing with a challenging coworker, take a moment to pause and consider your response before speaking. Try to truly understand their point of view by absorbing what they're sharing. Think of them as a whole person, not just the coworker you see from nine to five. They also have mothers, families, bills to pay, and many other struggles in life, most of which you do not know about. Remind yourself that they, too, probably want to be happy, even if they're unsure how to achieve that. After all, who is? Thinking of them as more than what seems obvious can help you avoid saying something you might regret and promote a more constructive dialogue.

Give coworkers your respect by listening without interruption and being open to their perspective. Choose your words from a place of common ground.

Cultivate empathy: Mindfulness can help you develop greater compassion for others, including difficult coworkers. Remember that you may not always know what they're dealing with in their personal lives. Try to put yourself in their shoes and understand their perspective. Seeing their view can help you find common ground and work toward a resolution. Search within yourself to find some compassion for the other person. If their life were less troubled, then your life would be better, too, since they wouldn't be so tough to deal with.

Let go of judgments: Mindfulness involves observing thoughts and emotions without judgment. When dealing with a problematic coworker, try to let go of any preconceived notions or critiques you may have about them. Whatever may have happened in the past is in the past, so don't approach a new situation with negative ideas. Being nonjudgmental can help you view the situation with an open mind and find a solution that works for everyone.

These steps may initially feel uncomfortable since you've previously built up less-than-understanding feelings toward them. But you can only control yourself; you cannot force others into your way of working. You can, however, cultivate a working relationship that strives for common goals. Mindfulness techniques will help you overcome your discomfort at the idea of working constructively, which is a powerful way to deal with difficult coworkers. By practicing self-awareness, active listening, intentional responding, empathy, and letting go of judgments, you can approach these challenging situations with greater clarity and mindfulness, leading to more constructive outcomes.

Mindfulness for HR Professionals

As an HR professional, you are responsible for the well-being of your employees and for ensuring that your organization runs smoothly and productively. Keeping employees engaged in their jobs is challenging in the current work environment. Yet it's important to deliver on the organization's needs and reduce employee turnover. One way to promote a healthy and productive workplace is by incorporating mindfulness practices into your organization's culture. Incorporating mindfulness into your organization can have numerous benefits, including reduced stress and burnout, improved employee engagement, and increased productivity.

HR Strategies to Promote Mindfulness in the Workplace

Offer mindfulness training and workshops: Provide your employees with opportunities to learn and practice mindfulness techniques during work hours. Invest in the well-being of your employees by showing them you support a healthy work environment and are willing to offer preventive and corrective measures to bring balance. You can offer workshops or bring in mindfulness experts to lead training sessions. You can also fund mindfulness subscriptions for your employees to practice independently. Access to mindfulness resources can help employees develop the skills to manage stress, stay focused, and make better decisions.

Create a mindful work environment: Encourage your employees to take daily breaks to practice mindfulness, whether through meditation, breathing exercises, or simply taking a few minutes to step away from work. Shift the culture toward normalizing mental and emotional well-being.

You can also create a designated space for mindfulness practices, such as a meditation room or a quiet area for employees to reflect. Share business journal articles from *HBR* and *Forbes*, which now frequently promote the benefits of mindfulness at work; you can find examples here: www.tenminutemindfulness.com/about.

Model mindfulness practices: As an HR professional, it's important to lead by example. Incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily routine can demonstrate the importance of these techniques and encourage your employees to do the same.

Incorporate mindfulness into your organization's policies: Consider incorporating mindfulness practices into your organization's policies, such as offering flexible work schedules or encouraging employees to take breaks throughout the day. Offer weekly stress-busting sessions remotely or in person. This flexibility can help create a culture that values mindfulness and prioritizes the well-being of employees.

Measure the impact of mindfulness practices: As with any organizational initiative, measuring the effects of mindfulness practices to determine their effectiveness is important. Doing this can involve tracking employee engagement, productivity, and well-being metrics. Or you can schedule small and casual check-ins or hold gatherings to create an environment where employees can constructively share their difficulties to find creative solutions for the overall good.

In conclusion, incorporating mindfulness practices into your organization's culture can have lasting benefits for your employees and your organization as a whole. By offering mindfulness training and workshops, creating a mindful work

environment, modeling mindfulness practices, incorporating mindfulness into policies, and measuring the impact of mindfulness practices, you can create a more mindful workplace that promotes employee well-being and productivity. In order to stay relevant and attract top talent, organizations now understand how important it is to cultivate a workforce that is highly in-tune with individual and group wellness needs. Expect to see continuing growth of mindfulness workshops and well-being programs at work to stimulate employee engagement and business results.

Mindfulness for Leaders

Leadership can be stressful and demanding, requiring individuals to make tough decisions, manage teams, and navigate complex situations. Mindfulness practices can be valuable tools for leaders to manage stress, increase self-awareness, and improve decision-making.

How Leaders Can Create a Mindful Workplace

Foster a culture of mindfulness: Leaders can help promote mindfulness throughout their organization by modeling mindful behaviors and creating opportunities for employees to learn and practice mindfulness techniques. Leaders who encourage others to be more understanding, empathetic, and engaged will grow a positive workplace culture, which leads to improved business performance, as seen in the Gallup survey (Fig 1).

Practice self-awareness: Mindfulness begins with awareness of your thoughts and emotions. As a leader, it's essential to reflect on your reactions and responses to situations. Self-

reflection can help you identify patterns of behavior and support you in make more conscious choices.

Cultivate empathy: Mindfulness can help leaders develop greater compassion for others, allowing them to understand and connect with their team members. By practicing active listening and seeking to understand others' perspectives, leaders can build stronger relationships and create a more collaborative work environment.

Take mindful breaks: It can be tempting for leaders to work long hours and push through stress, but taking mindful breaks throughout the day is crucial in promoting greater focus and productivity. Whether it's taking a few deep breaths, walking, or practicing meditation, taking time to recharge can help you stay present and engaged.

Make conscious decisions: Mindfulness can help leaders make more conscious decisions by promoting greater self-awareness and reducing the influence of biases and automatic reactions. Choose your words wisely to be constructive and focused on the greater good, not on short term or ego-driven impulses. By reflecting before deciding, leaders can consider all factors and make choices that align with their values and goals.

Incorporating mindfulness practices into leadership at work can help individuals manage stress, improve decision-making abilities, and build stronger relationships with their team members. By practicing self-awareness, cultivating empathy,

By reflecting before deciding, leaders can consider all factors and make choices that align with their values and goals.

taking mindful breaks, fostering a culture of mindfulness, and making conscious decisions, leaders can promote a more mindful and effective approach to leadership. Leaders play a pivotal role in business performance, and when they create an environment that embraces mental and emotional wellness, employees will feel included and supported. This inclusive attitude sets the stage for individuals to rise to their best performance and to unite together as strong and diverse teams.

Listed below are practical tips to bring mindfulness into your work life, no matter which role you have in the company.

1. At the beginning of the day, set an intention to consciously decide what you'd like to accomplish and how you'd like to manage any difficult situation. Prepare yourself with confidence and clarity, and create a mental picture of what success looks like. In doing so, you're starting with a winning mindset that will bring you a better outcome. Having a negative mindset typically leads to a negative outcome.
2. Lead by example. At the start of each meeting, check in with your coworkers, ask them how they're feeling, and ask about any recent successes they've enjoyed. This check-in will focus on the good, naturally spreading goodwill to others involved in the present meeting.
3. Take a few minutes to close your eyes and check in with yourself before a big meeting or presentation. Focus your thoughts inward and notice how you're feeling. Bring your attention to your breathing, breathe in good energy, and exhale any nervous thoughts or stress. Imagine yourself shining successfully.

4. Pay attention to your body. Take a few minutes throughout the day to notice where you feel tight. We tend to hold muscle tension in our jaw, temples, and shoulders. Do a quick body scan to release and relax these muscles intentionally. Exhale away muscle tension and breathe in invigorating energy.
5. At the end of each day, take a moment to reflect on anything that you're grateful for, no matter how hard this is. Find any little bit of goodness and bring that into your mind and your heart. When you train your mind to seek the good, you'll strengthen your mental muscles for finding opportunities instead of problems. Jot a short note on what you're thankful for and leave it for yourself to find the next day.
6. Stop worrying. Worrying does not prepare you for a bad situation; it only stresses you out. A clear mind and conscious effort will set you up for success, even in a bad situation. Avoiding needless worry will allow you to work through a challenge with your full mental capability rather than creating a downward spiral of negative thinking.

Summary

Mindfulness at work is becoming well accepted due to the recognizable improvements to organizational performance when employees are engaged.

Better focus and creativity, clear thinking, improved productivity, thoughtful decision-making, happier employees, lower turnover, and positive impact on the bottom line are proven benefits of mindfulness in the workplace.

HR professionals and leaders who create a culture of mindfulness set a trajectory for success.

Business workshops and employee benefits supporting mindfulness support healthy workplace routines.

A quick and easy Ten Minute Mindfulness practice you can do in your office or place of work

- Find a spot where you can sit without interruption. If you can close your door, please do so. If it's difficult to find a place where you'll have time to yourself, you might consider sitting alone in your car for ten minutes, or even in a bathroom stall. Simply find a quiet place to reset yourself and bring renewal to the remaining day. Settle into a seated position. This practice will allow you to focus and clarify your thoughts so that when you get back to work, you'll have greater productivity with renewed focus.
- Take a moment to consciously relax your whole body. Then take three deep breaths in and out to bring your attention inward. After that, begin to breathe normally. Bring your attention to areas that you may usually hold tight. Relax any muscle tension around your eyes and your temples. Drop and unclench your jaw. Drop and relax your shoulders. Let your arms hang comfortably to your sides. Feel your feet planted firmly on the ground. You may want to imagine that you can exhale any stress or difficult thoughts through your feet. Let any tension melt from your feet into the ground.
- Now, bring your attention to your breathing. Notice any comfortable sensations as you begin to relax more. As you inhale, breathe in relaxed energy, and exhale out any stress or unwanted and difficult thoughts. Simply imagine them leaving your body and mind as you breathe out. Keep breathing normally and imagine relaxation coming in through your in-breath and distracting thoughts leaving with your out-breath

Now imagine a ball or a dot in your mind's eye. Bring your focus inward to this dot inside your mind. These are your thoughts, and you want to keep them focused in your mind. See how long you can keep your attention on this spot in your mind.

- If you become distracted and start thinking of other thoughts that leave your mind, that's okay. Just return your focus back to your spot. See how long you can focus on your mind on your spot. It might be ten seconds, or it might be thirty seconds. Either way it's okay. Anytime your thoughts focus on what you need to do later, gently redirect your focus inward. As you strengthen your inner focus, rest assured that when you're done with this short practice, your clarity and productivity will increase, and you'll get even more done after taking these few minutes to reset. Focus again on your thoughts, then release any muscle tension in your jaw, your shoulders, or your hands. Breathe out any tension, and breathe in with focus and clarity. Spend another few moments focusing your thoughts and synchronizing your body's relaxation with those focused thoughts.
- Now turn your attention outward. Keeping your eyes closed, imagine that you're seeing a crystal-blue sky and a bright sun. Focus on the sun and notice the vast sky around it. Imagine this is your mind filled with clear thoughts and focus. Feel the wonderful sensations of this clear blue sky, which is your clear mind. Your creativity and productivity are as vast as the sky. Breathe in, feeling the invigorating energy; breathe out,

releasing any last bit of stress or distraction. Breathe in this focused and clear energy, and breathe out any difficulty.

- Open your eyes, wiggle your toes and fingers, and feel your renewed sense of focus and clarity. Bring this energy into your activities ahead.

Access guided introduction to mindfulness practices here:

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4 | Mindfulness for Teenagers

The teenage years include navigating the complexities of personality exploration, peer relationships, academic expectations, and hormonal changes, all of which can be challenging during this critical developmental period. You may be dealing with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty as a teenager. You might be feeling pressure from school, friends, and family and are struggling to find balance and calm in your life. You might also grapple with feelings of acceptance. These are common emotions during these challenging years; what you're experiencing is normal. Yet you don't have to accept these turbulent emotions like a leaf blowing in the wind. You can take steps to improve the quality of your feelings during your teen years. Mindfulness can help you manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges.

A key component is letting go of what you cannot directly control, or walking away from drama. It is not to say that you ignore your problems; it means you should create a buffer between your emotions and your response.

There have likely been times when you have experienced being deeply aware of what you were doing—the past and the future seemed to disappear, and the only moment was the present one. Maybe this happens for you when you play sports. Or maybe you have this kind of awareness when you play a musical instrument, when you pet your dog or cat, or when you listen to your favorite song. Whether you realized it or not, in those moments you were experiencing mindfulness!

Mindfulness is the practice of being present in the moment without judgment or distraction. It involves paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, and sensations and accepting them as valid. A key component is letting go of what you cannot directly control, or walking away from drama. It is not to say that you ignore your problems; it means you should create a buffer between your emotions and your response. When you deal with a situation with rational thought instead of raw emotion, you'll find that you can rise above challenges that may otherwise bring you down. When you practice mindfulness, you can effectively deal with situations, manage stress, improve focus and concentration, and cultivate a greater sense of peace and well-being.

How to Start Practicing Mindfulness As a Teenager

Find a quiet space: To practice mindfulness, you should find a quiet area to focus without distractions. Your area could be a bedroom, a quiet park, or even a corner of your school library.

Sit comfortably: Get into a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, making sure you feel relaxed and at ease.

Focus on your breath:

1. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath.
2. Pay attention to the sensations of your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
3. As you focus on your breath, try to relax any areas of your body holding muscle tension.
4. Release this tension with your exhales.

5. Notice any thoughts that arise, but don't try to push them away or change them. Just notice.
6. Do this focused breath work for a few minutes each day.

Notice your thoughts: As you practice mindfulness, you may notice that your mind starts to wander. This is normal! When you observe your mind wandering, acknowledge the thought and bring your attention back to your breath.

Practice regularly: Like any skill, mindfulness requires discipline and training. Set aside a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness and build up your practice over time.

Use positive affirmations: Boost your self-confidence by reminding yourself that you are worthy of love, you contribute significantly to the world, and others admire you (even if you don't know it). Positive self-talk can lower your stress and balance the stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, that cause worry and anxiety.

Seek professional help: If your anxiety or depression symptoms become too difficult for you to manage, or if you're struggling to make it through your days, then you

Positive self-talk can lower your stress and balance the stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, that cause worry and anxiety. Remind yourself that you have important contributions in the world.

should seek professional help. A trusted family member, a school advisor, or a professional counselor can lead you to a treatment plan.

Mindfulness Practices for Teenagers

1. *Regular breathing exercises:* Focusing on your breath can be a helpful way to calm your mind and reduce stress. Try taking a few deep breaths or counting your breaths as you inhale and exhale. A slightly more involved exercise is to breathe in for four seconds, hold your breath for four seconds, and then breathe out for four seconds. You can do this routine any time during the day, even during class or while studying. It's an impactful reset button during trying circumstances.
2. *Body scan meditation:* This practice involves scanning your body from head to toe and noticing any sensations or feelings you experience. Body scans can help you become more aware of your body and any areas of tension. To practice, lay down comfortably, close your eyes, and focus your thoughts on various parts of your body, from head to toe, paying attention to any sensations or feelings. Don't judge these sensations as good or bad; simply notice them and then let go and move on to the next area. This can help you become more aware of your body and any areas of tension. It is also helpful to use guided meditations in as little as ten minutes a day. Visit www.TenMinuteMindfulness.com for suggestions.
3. *Mindful listening:* This practice involves paying attention to the sounds around you without judging or analyzing them. Take a few minutes daily to sit quietly and listen to your surroundings. Close your eyes, relax your body, and notice any sounds that are farther in the distance, such as birds chirping, the wind blowing, or people talking. Next, draw your attention closer, and focus on sounds immediately around you, such as the sound of a fan in the room. Finally, notice any sounds from your body, such as

breathing. Notice these sounds, accept them, and let them be.

4. *Gratitude practice*: This involves focusing on the things you are grateful for. Take a few minutes each day to think about what you are thankful for and cultivate a sense of appreciation and joy. A spirit of gratitude can help you shift your mindset from negative thoughts to positive ones. Each night think of three things you're grateful for from the day. You could even keep a gratitude journal to train yourself to seek the good in your days. When you do these practices, studies show that you're rewiring your brain to seek opportunities for bettering your life. In fact, the field of applied positive psychology recognizes gratitude as the most vital signature strength for cultivating happiness in life. Check out more information here: www.tenminutemindfulness.com/gratitude-matters.
5. *Mindful eating*: Try eating a meal slowly and mindfully, paying attention to the taste, smell, and texture of your food. Think of all the people who contributed to putting this food before you, from the farmers to the grocers to your caregivers, who provided you with this meal. Mindful attention can help you appreciate and savor your food while also being alert to when your body is satisfied. This body awareness will help you manage mindless cravings, make purposeful choices, and avoid overeating.
6. *Mindful journaling*: Mindful journaling can help you become more aware of your thoughts and feelings, as you take the time to reflect on your experiences and emotions. With greater awareness, you can identify the triggers that lead to your anxiety. It will also help you process your feelings and explore new concepts. Set aside a few minutes each day to write in a journal, using prompts such as "What am I grateful for today?" or "What situations led to my anxiety today?"

Remember, mindfulness is a skill that takes time, practice, and patience to develop. It's okay if you first struggle or your mind wanders during practice. Just keep practicing, and over time you will start to notice that you're strengthening your practice. By starting small and building up your mindfulness routine over time, it will instill habits that bring you an increased sense of well-being, improved concentration, and decreased anxiety.

Summary

The teenage years have many challenges that can bring uncertainty, anxiety, self-consciousness, and even sadness into your life. These feelings are normal.

Mindfulness practices can help you manage recurring anxiety and other difficulties so that you can better enjoy your precious teenage years.

Simple practices like a body scan session or breathing practices can get you over road bumps through your teen years.

A Ten Minute Mindfulness relaxation practice when you need to reconnect with yourself

- Find a place where you can lie down without distraction. Get comfortable in your bed or in your position, close your eyes, and breathe normally through your nose if possible.
- Begin to settle in to your position more deeply, then take three deep breaths in and out, turning your focus inward and allowing yourself some space to reconnect with yourself. This will bring you a deep sense of comfort and allow you to reset from any challenges that you've had earlier today or in the previous days. Relax any areas that you might be holding muscle tension, such as your eyes, your jaw, your shoulders, or your hands. Gently release any muscle tightness wherever you're holding it. Check in with various areas of your body, focusing first on your feet, feeling any sensations there, then noticing them and letting them go. Move your attention up your body, feeling secure in your body as you focus on your legs. Take a few breaths in and out as you draw your attention to your whole lower body. Feel as if your lower body is connected to the earth and any difficulty could melt away from this area.
- Move your attention upward to your abdomen and chest. Feel your heart and belly, and feel secure and nurtured as you take a few breaths in and out, focusing on your entire midsection. Feel a sense of connectedness to your heart as you spend a few breaths focusing on this area. Your inner self, or your core self, has unlimited strength and this is something that you can tap

into when you consciously bring your attention here. Breathe in and out a few more times, connecting to your inner self.

- Now, bring your attention to your head. Relax and unclench your jaw. Bring your attention to your cheeks, your ears, your eyes, and your forehead. Breathing in and out, begin to release any unwanted thoughts as you breathe out. Imagine that you're breathing in soothing energy to ease any difficult thoughts. As those thoughts break apart, release them as you exhale. Breathing in, feel as if you're cleaning and washing away stressful thoughts, rinsing them out as you breathe out. Spend a few minutes soothing any difficult thoughts with your cleansing in-breaths, and letting go with your out-breaths. Allow your mind to ease into a sense of comfort and security.
- Next, bring your thoughts to positive affirmations. Focus on your mind and your heart. Speak your truth from your mind, reminding yourself that you are a wonderful and valuable person. Repeat to yourself: **I have so much to contribute to this world. I am worthy. I am valuable.**
- Focus on your heart. Breathing in, feel your thoughts as you remind yourself that you are loved. Imprint positive affirmations on your heart: **I am loved and capable of loving deeply. I am nurtured and secure. I can connect to my inner sense of self. I release my difficulties. I am a whole and complete beautiful being.**
- Spend a few moments keeping your thoughts and feelings focused on the wonderful person that you are. Breathe in a sense of self confidence and security. Breathe out any anxiety or difficulty. Breathe in love and nurturing thoughts. Breathe out any self-doubt and self-consciousness. Know that when you connect to your inner self, you are tuning in to unlimited

potential. Your inner self is full of abundant goodness and is free from anxiety. Breathe in and out a few more times deeply, connecting with your best inner qualities. Imprint this connection between your breath and your inner self.

- Know that you can reconnect to your inner self at any time of the day by simply breathing in and consciously connecting. Associate this connection with your breath, and take that with you as you begin to return to the present. Gently open your eyes, reminding yourself that you can reconnect at any time by breathing in and consciously connecting to your source of inner self-confidence and completeness. Go about the rest of your day with love and confidence.

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5 | Mindfulness for Seniors

As we age, our bodies and minds undergo many physical and emotional changes that can impact our overall well-being. If you're a senior, it's not uncommon for you to experience feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness as you navigate these changes. Some days may be physically challenging, while others may be emotionally difficult. There can also be much uncertainty in your days or waning confidence engaging in activities that used to come easy to you. It's important to remember that it's all a part of aging. In some ways, it's a blessing to embrace your current life and how far you've come.

If you've heard of mindfulness but don't know where to start, that's perfectly normal; most people your age feel the same way. So what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the present moment.

The more we aim to stay present, the stronger our focus becomes.

It involves focusing on your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations with curiosity and openness. It's not about eliminating negative thoughts or emotions but learning to observe them without getting caught up in them. In many ways, it's simply the art of "stopping and smelling the roses."

Practicing mindfulness is a powerful routine that can help you manage stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions while improving your overall mental and physical health. It will lead

*If you've heard of
mindfulness but don't
know where to start,
that's perfectly normal;
most people your age
feel the same way.*

you to more fulfilling mental and emotional health by cultivating awareness and acceptance in the present moment.

What Are the Benefits of Mindfulness for Seniors?

There are many benefits to practicing mindfulness, especially for seniors. With practice, mindfulness can improve your confidence and engagement in your daily activities.

Reduced stress and anxiety: Mindfulness can help you manage stress and anxiety by becoming used to observing your thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them. When you find yourself experiencing stressful thoughts, you can change gears by focusing on your breath, relaxing your body, and shifting to a constructive mindset.

Improved mood: Practicing mindfulness can help cultivate a sense of calm and contentment, improving your overall mood. With continued practice, you'll be able to steer your mind away from the unproductive thoughts of things out of your control and have increased feelings of contentment.

Increased self-awareness: Mindfulness can help you become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, which can help you better understand yourself and your needs. You'll be more aware of your subtle thoughts and emotions that will help you relate to your family and friends more empathetically. You'll also be attuned to minor physical quirks and be able to take action on physical issues. A seemingly small issue can turn into a big problem if you're not paying attention to your body's needs. Many diseases start with minor ailments, and when you increase listen to the small and quiet symptoms, you can limit further progression.

Improved cognitive function and mental health: Studies have shown that practicing mindfulness routinely can enhance cognitive function in seniors, including memory, attention, and decision-making skills. “Long-term mindfulness practice may be associated with cognitive and functional improvements for older adults with [mild cognitive impairment].”¹ It will also help you manage feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression by promoting a sense of calm and contentment.

Improved relationships: Mindfulness can help you deepen relationships with others romantically, socially, and within the family. A greater sense of self and social awareness will help you communicate more effectively with others by listening actively and responding thoughtfully. Over time, others will be grateful for your focused attention and open themselves to you.

Reduced physical symptoms: Mindfulness studies reveal that it helps to reduce physical signs of chronic conditions such as arthritis, hypertension, and chronic pain. When your mind devotes excessive attention to physical problems and pain, your suffering is compounded, leading to both physical and emotional suffering. Continued practice will help you release tension associated with physical discomfort, which leads to less secondary suffering.

Better sleep: Mindfulness can help you sleep better by reducing feelings of stress and anxiety that can interfere with sleep. When you strengthen your ability to focus your mind, you’re less likely to experience distracting thoughts that keep you awake at night. The lower muscle tension that comes with continued practice will also help you experience beneficial and more nourishing sleep.

An increased sense of purpose: Mindfulness can help you connect with your sense of purpose and find meaning in your daily life. When you're more deeply aware of yourself and your needs, you can search inside yourself for the subtle whispers of your inner desires. With greater confidence, you can pursue and achieve your goals.

Mindfulness is a powerful tool for seniors if you're looking to improve your mental and emotional well-being. Continued practice will also improve physical ailments and help with pain management. By practicing mindfulness, you can cultivate awareness and acceptance in the present moment, which can help you better navigate the challenges of aging. Whether through breathing exercises, mindful walking, meditation, or other techniques, you can experience the many benefits of mindfulness and improve your overall quality of life.

As a Senior, Are You Ready to Take the First Step into a Mindful Life?

There are many ways you can incorporate mindfulness into your daily life.

1. *Start small:* Seniors new to mindfulness may find starting with short, simple exercises helpful. For example, you can take a few moments when you wake up to set an intention for the day. This may include cultivating an appreciative mindset or vowing not to lose your patience with a challenging task. You may also take short breaks during the day to stop and smell the roses, which is a tried-and-true mindfulness practice! Notice the beauty around you, breathe it in, and be grateful for the moment.

2. *Breathing exercises:* Deep-breathing exercises are a great way to cultivate mindfulness. You can take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, focusing on the sensation of the breath moving in and out of your body. Notice how your breath slows after you do this a few times, and your body may begin to relax. Pay attention to any feelings that arise, even unpleasant ones, and then let go of any feelings without resisting or fighting them.
3. *Practice mindfulness during everyday activities:* Mindfulness doesn't have to involve a formal meditation practice. You can practice mindfulness during everyday activities, such as walking or washing dishes, by focusing on your physical sensations and surroundings. Pay attention to the little moments, then pause to imprint those memories to carry with you.
4. *Use guided meditations:* Guided meditations can be helpful for you if you're new to mindfulness or if you struggle to quiet your mind. These will teach you how to sit or lay down during practice, plus give you breathing and relaxation tips. You do not need to be physically fit to do these practices; they're as simple as sitting down and focusing your mind through positive mental imagery. Many free resources are available online, such as apps and websites offering guided meditations specifically for seniors. Even short, ten-minute mindfulness sessions can quickly and easily get you started.
5. *Connect with others:* Practicing mindfulness is a great way to strengthen your practice and build relationships. It might feel weird initially, since there are still outdated perceptions of mindfulness being unusual. People now widely accept it as a regular part

of a healthy routine, free from religious or spiritual roots. You can join a local mindfulness group or class, or even start a mindfulness practice with friends or family. The new friendships that you form can bring a greater sense of fulfillment to your life.

6. *Mindful walking*: Going for a walk is a great way to get exercise and practice mindfulness at the same time. You can deeply pay attention to many sensations while walking, such as the impact of your feet hitting the ground, the feel of the air on your skin, and the sights and sounds around you. Try not to label anything as “good” or “bad.” Just notice the world around you with playful eyes in the same way a child might watch a butterfly on a branch.
7. *Meditation*: Meditation is a powerful tool for cultivating mindfulness. You can start by finding a quiet, comfortable place to sit with your body supported comfortably. Then close your eyes and begin to focus on your breath. Clear your head of distractions or troubles as much as possible (your to-do list will be waiting for you after your session). When your mind wanders, you can gently bring your attention back to your breath.
8. *Mindful eating*: You can practice mindfulness while eating by paying attention to the way your food tastes and smells, and its texture. You can also try eating slowly and savoring each bite, noticing how your body responds to the flavors and textures.
9. *Mindful journaling*: Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help seniors cultivate mindfulness. You can write about your experiences without judgment, focusing on what you feel in the present moment.
10. *Be patient and compassionate*: Mindfulness is a practice that takes time and patience to develop. You should

be kind and compassionate with yourself as you learn to cultivate mindfulness and should not judge yourself harshly for any perceived “failures.”

Summary

As a senior, your body, mind, and emotions are likely changing, which is a normal part of aging.

Along with aging, you may have feelings of uncertainty, loneliness, concern about your future or finances, or many other worries. Mindfulness can help you maintain constructive thoughts.

Guided meditation videos can help you get started, or you can take simple steps during your everyday life.

You can pave the way in making mindfulness for seniors a regular part of your community activities!

A brief seated mindfulness session to grow your heart

- Find a comfortable chair to sit on with your back supported and your feet touching the ground. Relax your arms gently at your sides, or put your hands in your lap. When you're ready, close your eyes and turn your attention inward.
- Take three deep breaths in and out of your nose, if possible, then just breathe normally.
- Start by relaxing areas where you may commonly hold muscle tightness. Relax your jaw, soften your eyes, drop your shoulders, and rest your feet on the ground. Bring your attention to your head, neck, and face. Breathe in and out. As you do, notice any sensations in your head. You may have some discomfort, and if you do, simply notice it but do not assign it a label, such as bad or painful. Observe the discomfort and then exhale your focus away from this area as you breathe out.
- Shift your attention to your chest and notice how your body responds as you breathe. Spend a few moments focusing on the wonder of your body doing exactly what it should be doing as you relax further. Shift downward to your abdomen, noticing any feelings or sensations there. Again, if you have any discomfort, simply notice it, soften any muscle tension, release, and let go. Move on to your upper legs, then focus on your lower legs. Finally, pay attention to your feet on the ground. As you exhale, imagine any of your painful feelings melting away through your feet.

- Now bring your attention to and put your hand on your heart. Notice any peaceful, happy, or loving feelings within your heart. Even if you only have a small feeling like this, focus on it and grow this feeling in your heart. Imagine that within your heart you have a flower that is about to bloom with each inhale and exhale. The petals gently open and your heart expands further. With each breath, your flower opens wider, and your love and abundance grow. Take a few more breaths, imagining your flower blossoming and your heart expanding to vast amounts of abundance, peace, and love. Now imagine your loved ones in your heart as your heart continues to grow with each breath.
- Now turn your focus to your mind. Imagine that your mind is a shining light, just like a lighthouse near a misty ocean. Imagine the light of your mind shining brightly, so brightly that it cuts through the mist and dissolves any fuzziness around it. The light of your mind shines so brightly that it creates a clear space around you and around others. With each breath in, imagine your light shining even brighter. With each breath out, imagine the mist dissolving and the clarity of the sky getting brighter. Breathe in and out a few times like this, growing your light with tremendous clarity and sharpness. Your mind is limitless with potential.
- Feel this limitless potential in your mind, and connect with the abundance of love in your heart. With your next breath in, allow your light and love to permeate through your whole body. With your exhale, release any pain, discomfort, or difficulty from your body through your feet. Continue breathing and

expanding the goodness within your body. Imagine that your inner goodness grows so strong that it diffuses completely out of your body and touches those around you with a beautiful, loving light of being.

- Slowly bring yourself back to the present moment. Open your eyes and rest for a few moments before getting up slowly. Keep this strong sense of inner goodness with you as you go about your day and interact with others. Know that you carry love and a clear mind with you wherever you go.

Access guided introduction to mindfulness practices here:

[Book Guided Sessions | TenMinuteMindfulness](#)

PART 2

Please visit [Mindfulness in Everyday Life eBook](#) to
purchase the complete version

Notes

Chapter 1: What Is Mindfulness?

1. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0260691714002226>.
2. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/use-mindfulness-to-cope-with-chronic-pain>.
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4. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2798510>.
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4941786/>.
6. <https://www.tenminutemindfulness.com/the-sleep-suite>.
7. <https://hbr.org/2017/01/spending-10-minutes-a-day-on-mindfulness-subtly-changes-the-way-you-react-to-everything>.

Chapter 3: Mindfulness At Work

1. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/321029/employee-engagement-meta-brief-pdf>.

Chapter 5: Mindfulness for Seniors

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6159696/>.

About the Author

Tara Nylese, MSc, C-MI, is a career scientist with experience as a global senior manager in corporate America. She created the Ten Minute Mindfulness program to facilitate a scientific approach to mental and emotional wellness practices in the workplace for anyone, no matter their experience. She's been a speaker, guest lecturer, and workshop facilitator at many prestigious universities worldwide, including Harvard, Princeton, and MIT. She has been a dedicated member and practitioner at the internationally recognized Kadampa Meditation Centers for over ten years.

She holds a Master of Science and is certified as a Meditation Instructor by the American Institute of Healthcare Professionals, certified in Applied Positive Psychology from UPenn, and as a Personality Insights DISC Behavioral Specialist.

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