

Your little mindfulness workbook



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An introduction to mindfulness

Mindfulness is not a skill which will be quick and easy to learn, and it requires regular practice to be consistently beneficial. To help you get started with mindfulness, follow and log the mindfulness exercises in this workbook.

EXERCISE 1

The three-minute breathing space

Trying to focus on the present moment while being aware of all the different things that are going on in the surrounding environment is a difficult skill to master. One of the most popular methods to help you focus on the present moment is through focusing your attention on your breathing pattern.

What is the three-minute breathing space exercise?

This exercise is focused on helping you break away from a negative cycle of feeling or thinking by temporarily shifting your focus away from that negative experience and onto your breathing. This 3-minute exercise is characterised by self-awareness, acceptance and being in the present moment.

Step 1

Ask yourself right now:

Where am I ?

How am I ?

What am I thinking?

These simple questions help you to step away from negative thinking habits and raises your awareness of the present moment.

Step 2

The second step involves directing your full focus on your breath. To do this, put your hands on your stomach and every time you exhale (breathe out) say breathe. Keep repeating this process until you notice your attention shift onto your breathing pattern.

Step 3

In the final step, start to focus your attention on how your body feels. For example, do you notice any muscular tension? Is your heart beating fast? How fidgety are you in the current moment?

In the 3 minutes you do this exercise, you allow yourself to switch off and recharge for a moment. This moment can make a big difference in helping you cope better with any stressful scenarios you experience.

EXERCISE 2

Mindful eating

Mindful eating is very different to the normal way you would eat your food and involves the following:

Eating your selected food product at a slow pace and without distraction.

Noticing the details of the food product using your 5 senses; sight, touch, sound, smell and taste.



Developing an awareness of how your body feels in response to the food product before, during and after you have eaten it i.e. hunger cues, sounds of the body digesting the food, satisfaction from consuming the food.

Noticing the effects the food has on your thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Be mindful of the portions i.e. what size portion makes you full?

Choose an environment that is quiet, relaxing and personal to you.

Noticing your responses to food (likes, dislikes, no effect) without judgement.

What is mindful eating?

Just like any mindfulness exercise, mindful eating is designed to help reach a complete state of awareness of the present by acknowledging your emotions and physical sensations.



Step 1

Choose a variety of food to eat and compare the differences in how they make you feel.

Step 2

Eat slowly and pause to use all your senses to acknowledge details about the food product.

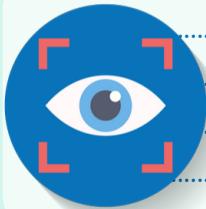
Step 3

After eating, ask yourself how do you feel, what are you thinking, how does my body feel after eating.

Step 4

Take time to notice your hunger feelings before eating, when you feel full and how it impacts your energy levels and your level of relaxation.

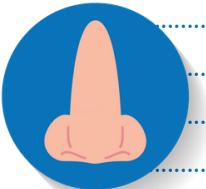
Write down the observations about your food (**visual sense**)



What does the food feel like? (**kinaesthetic/touch sense**)



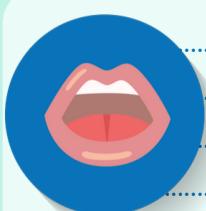
What does the food smell like? (**sense of smell**)



Are there any sounds you can notice when eating the food i.e. unwrapping a package, peeling the skin etc? (**sense of sound**)



What does the food taste like? How many different flavours can you identify? (**sense of taste**)



How has the food affected the way you think, your emotions, your feelings and energy level? How does your body feel in response to the food?

EXERCISE 3

The body scan: Letting go of the daily stresses and tension before sleep

What is the body scan exercise?

This exercise is focused on developing your self-awareness of how your body feels at one given time.

The exercise starts by getting yourself to focus on your breathing by using a deep breathing technique such as the three- minute breathing space. The aim of this is to bring your awareness on to the present moment and detach yourself from anything that may be stressing you out.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Dim the lights 30 minutes before your bed time.	Avoid using electronic devices.	Choose a comfortable position in bed. It's recommended you lay down on your back and have your hands by your sides.	Once relaxed, focus your attention on your breathing.

To help achieve a calm and relaxed state before you complete the body scan exercise, we recommend you breathe in slowly through your nose for **4 seconds**, hold your breath for **one second** and then breathe out slowly through your mouth for **6 seconds**. Continue this process until you notice yourself feeling physically heavier (like you are sinking into the bed), calmer and focused on your breathing pattern.

If you are finding it hard, it can help to put your hands on your abdomen and notice it rising when the air comes into the body and going flat as the air leaves. If you notice yourself becoming distracted, simply acknowledge what has happened, say 'it's OK' and calmly move your attention back on your breathing.

Once you are breathing at a steady and consistent rate, the next step is to start scanning your body from the toes up and identify all the different physical sensations you might be experiencing.

Step 5

- Start the body scan by closing your eyes and imagine the outline of the body...as if you had drawn a line around it.
- Bring your attention firstly down to your feet. With each breath out, slowly move your attention up to your ankles, then your calves, then your knees and then your thighs.
- Observe the sensations you are experiencing throughout your legs. If your mind begins to become distracted, gently notice this without judgement and bring your mind back to noticing the sensations in your legs. If you notice any discomfort, pain or stiffness, don't judge this. Just simply notice it. Observe how all sensations rise and fall, shift and change moment to moment. Notice how no sensation is permanent. Just observe and allow the sensations to be in the moment, just as they are.
- Next, move up the body and onto the lower back and pelvis. Follow the same procedure you used for the legs and be curious about the different sensations you might feel. Does anything feel tight or sore? Can you notice the points of contact with the furniture? Can you feel your clothes touching your skin?
- Next move up to your stomach, chest and heart. Can you notice how the stomach rises and falls as you breathe in and out. Can you notice how fast your heart is beating? Let go any judgements you may have and just acknowledge/accept the sensations and feelings you are experienced.
- On the next exhale, move your attention on your arms. Does the right arm feel different to the left arm? Does one arm feel more tense? You may notice as you breathe in and out, your arms start to relax and tension flows away.
- Continue to breathe deeply and on your next exhale, shift your focus onto your neck and shoulders (an area where we carry a lot of tension and stress). Does your neck feel tight? Do your shoulders feel raised? Try to let go off any thoughts, feelings and emotions and stay in the present moment. As you breathe out, tell yourself 'tension flow away...'
- Finally, move your attention onto your scalp, head and face. Observe all the sensations occurring there. Does your forehead feel heavy or tight? Do you notice your nostrils moving as the air goes in and out of your nose? Allow your face to loosen up with each breath.
- You have now finished the body scan, so allow your focus to become holistic and to include the whole body again. Simply breathe in deeply one more time and as you exhale, allow your body to sink into the bed or chair.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

Your daily mindfulness log

Date.....

Day	Minutes	Mindfulness Exercise	Observations
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

How do you feel after completing a mindfulness session?
