

# What is mindfulness?

The practice of paying attention or noting whatever is happening in the moment with a gentle and open mind.



## Mindfulness is about “being” rather than “doing”

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The demands of daily life divide our attention and energy, causing stress. We may not be able to control the events that cause stress around us. But we can control how we react.

## How does mindfulness help you deal with stress?

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Certain situations create stress because they bring up feelings from the past, cause us to project into the future or play on our fears of the unknown. Staying in the present moment during a stressful time can help us respond appropriately. Paying attention only to the present takes practice, though. Practicing mindfulness during your day and when you're not stressed will help you use mindfulness as a tool when coping with stress.

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## Practice mindfulness throughout your day

Here are some easy ways to practice mindfulness as you go through your day.

### Notice how you feel when you wake up

Take a few minutes to lie in bed. Notice any sensations.

### Pay attention to your hunger signals

- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so make sure you have something healthy to eat. If you're in a hurry, take a breath and sit down — even if it's just for the first few bites.
- Instead of grazing on food all day without even tasting it, pick a time to have your snack and stop to enjoy it.

### Drive to work with the radio off

Take a deep breath if someone cuts you off or if you're sitting in traffic.

### Notice what it feels like to be sitting at your desk

- Pay attention to when you need to move, eat, drink and empty your bladder.
- Take short walking or movement breaks. Observe how your body feels after. Be conscious of your energy level.
- As you talk to people, notice the impact they have on you. Be aware of how your words and attitudes are impacting others, too.
- Note what you do when you're talking to someone and you get a text message or a phone call.

## Allow yourself some transition time from work to home

- As you drive home from work, turn the radio off. And when you walk into your home, notice how you feel.
- Be aware of what you are watching on TV and how it impacts your feelings and mood.
- Notice if your bedtime routine is relaxing or busy and what your state of mind is when you get into bed.

## The essential question

Ask yourself on a regular basis, “In this moment, what is the most self-caring choice **I can make?**”

## How can mindfulness help you?

- Navigate change with more ease
- Build resilience
- Have more energy
- Make room for new ideas
- Be creative and innovate
- Stay calm and avoid reacting
- Focus on the task at hand
- Have more clarity to solve problems
- Arrive with a skillful presence
- Think before speaking
- Improve relationships
- Be patient with self and others
- Feel compassion for self and others
- Be effective
- Feel happier and more fulfilled