



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of letting go of the noise in our head. Instead of doing and reacting and trying to fix everything, being mindful is about sitting still, being aware of what is happening in this present moment—not with words and thinking, but by listening fully with a mind free of judgments and opinions and all the rest of the baggage that become a major source of stress. Observe thoughts and emotions but let them pass without judgment.

Mindfulness meditation is not hard, there is no right or wrong way to do it, but it may take practice to quiet the mind for an extended period of time. Your mind will wander. That's ok, just pay attention to the thoughts and let them go by. Start by setting aside 10 to 20 minutes a day at first. No special gear needed. No cost. All you'll need is a quiet space. Most people meditate with closed eyes, but you can focus on an object, a candle, for example. Concentrating on the flame might make it easier to clear the noise. The main idea is to focus your attention; this is what helps free your mind from the many distractions that cause stress and worry. Focus attention on such things as a specific object, an image, a mantra. One way to start is to focus on breathing. Concentrate on the inhale and the exhale, slow and relaxed. Always bring the wandering mind back to the breath. As your meditation skills increase, consciously visualize the release of tension, beginning at the head, eyelids, shoulders, fingers, and moving slowly down to the toes. Breathe relaxation into all the muscles and all parts of the body. Prayer is the best known and most widely practiced example of meditation. Some people use religious mantras to focus, relax and quiet the mind.

The clinical effects of meditation are becoming clearer. Mindfulness is taught at many medical centers to help people cope with a broad range of physical and psychological symptoms, including reducing anxiety, pain, and depression, enhancing mood and self-esteem, and decreasing stress. Some people use meditation to enhance creativity or improve performance.

Source: Paralysis Resource Guide 2013

Websites

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Meditation An Introduction

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>

About.com: Stress Management “Everyday Mindfulness Exercises For Stress Relief”

<http://stress.about.com/od/tensionamers/a/exercises.htm>

Mindful

<http://www.mindful.org/>

Mindful is an initiative that celebrates being mindful in all aspects of daily living—through *Mindful* magazine, [mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org), and social media.

PsychCentral: How Mindfulness Can Mitigate the Cognitive Symptoms of Depression

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/how-mindfulness-can-mitigate-the-cognitive-symptoms-of-depression#1>

WildMind Buddhist Meditation: What is Mindfulness

<http://www.wildmind.org/applied/daily-life/what-is-mindfulness>

University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society

<http://www.umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=41252>

UCLA’s Mindful Awareness Research Center

<http://marc.ucla.edu/>

UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness

<http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/Pages/default.aspx>

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