



NJWELL
Working for a
Healthy New Jersey

Horizon



**STRESS
WELL**



MINDFULNESS

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment – and accepting it without judgment.

Why is it important?

Mindfulness can bring improvements in many areas of wellness, and positive changes in health behaviors. Possible outcomes of practicing mindfulness are:



Physical:

- Relaxation, feeling more rested, and resolution of insomnia
- Diminished sense of pain
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved weight management and food intake
- Decreased risk of injury from habitual tasks or activities
- Treatment of eating disorders and substance abuse



Mental:

- Increased focus and efficiency in daily life
- Enhanced ability to sustain attention and complete complex tasks
- Improved memory and learning processes
- Broader perspective



Psychological:

- Increased contentment and overall satisfaction
- Relief from anxiety and depression
- Management of obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Decreased feelings of stress
- Enhanced perspective on negative thoughts and difficult feelings
- Brings thoughts to the present, as opposed to painful thoughts about the past or future



Social:

- Deeper connections with others
- Improved resolution of conflicts
- Keeps you fully engaged in activities and helps to savor experiences as they occur



QUICK TIP!

Practice, practice, practice. Mindfulness becomes easier and more effective the more it is practiced!

Did You Know??

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy may be as effective as medication in preventing depression recurrence.



MINDFULNESS

How do I do it?

Mindfulness can be cultivated without special training or lots of spare time. In general, it involves training the mind to focus its attention on the present moment in a systemic way, while accepting whatever arises. Try out a variety of practices and see what works best for you!

Practice 1: Basic mindfulness

Sit quietly and focus on your natural breathing or on a word or mantra that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts and feelings to come and go. Observe them and accept them without judgment. Redirect your focus on breath or mantra.

Practice 2: Acceptance

When you feel a craving or an urge (to eat excess food or practice another unwanted behavior), acknowledge the urge and understand that it will pass. Notice how your body feels. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the knowledge that it will subside.

Practice 3: STOP

Stop what you're doing.

Take a few deep breaths. Say to yourself, "in" as you're breathing in and "out" as you're breathing out, if that helps with concentration.

Observe. Notice your thoughts and feelings. Name your emotions. Observe your body and any physical sensations. Lift your eyes and take in your surroundings.

Possibility. Ask yourself what is new and what is a positive forward step.

Practice 4: 5-4-3-2-1

5: Acknowledge FIVE things you SEE around you.

4: Acknowledge FOUR things you can TOUCH around you.

3: Acknowledge THREE things you HEAR.

2: Acknowledge TWO things you can SMELL.

Practice 5: Self-Compassion Break

Step 1: Be mindful: Without judgment or analysis, notice what you're feeling. Say, "This is a moment of suffering" or "This hurts."

Step 2: Accept your feelings and remember you are not alone: Everyone experiences these deep and painful human emotions, although the causes might be different. Say to yourself, "Suffering is something everyone experiences at some points." or "Even though I feel anxious, that is just how I feel right now."

Step 3: Be kind to yourself: Put your hands on your heart and say something like, "I give myself compassion" or "I accept myself as I am."

Sources: Harvard Health, Greater Good, PsychCentral.com, GreaterGood