

Mindfulness for Parents & Caregivers



Mindful Breathing

This exercise is one that can be done anytime and anywhere: in the car, before sleep, in the shower, on a walk, before getting out of bed. It takes one minute of focusing on your breathing.

- To begin, breath in through the nose and out through the mouth with each breath being about 6 seconds.
- As the breath comes in and out, let your thoughts and concerns and everything that is not your breath go.
- Pay close attention to how the breath feels going in and out of your body.



Mindful Observation

This exercise is designed to support your ability to recognize what is around you and appreciate those things that you generally do not notice, whether it is in nature or items around your house.

- First, choose something that is near you or in your line of sight. It can be anything that you can observe for one or two minutes.
- Second, observe and take in whatever it is that you are focusing on while taking deep breaths. Look at it and think about the thing as a whole and the different aspects of the thing at which you are looking.
- Pay close attention to how the breath feels going in and out of your body.



Mindful Awareness

The purpose of this exercise is to increase awareness of the small or simple or usually ignored processes (both physical and emotional) that you experience throughout the day.

- Before starting to practice awareness, take a moment to think of an activity that is small and usually not thought about that you do more than one time a day (holding your child's hand, picking up a utensil, washing your hands).
- When you do that activity, take a second and feel and experience whatever it is that you are doing by thinking about how that thing makes you feel, the purpose of what you are doing, or where you are while you are doing that activity.



Mindful Listening

This is an exercise to encourage fully listening to some piece of music without the impact of what the song might mean to you. Take away the emotional meaning (whether positive or negative) behind the song and just listen to the notes and words and melodies and instruments.

- The first step is to pick a song that is new to you; it does not matter the type of song if it's new to you.
- Second, sit or lay down, close your eyes, and turn the music up so that it is the focus of your hearing.
- Third, even if you do not like the genre, just simply listen to the different sounds within the piece, the instruments that are playing, the way the song's volume and tempo changes, how the voice or voices sound, and other aspects of the song.



Mindful Immersion

This exercise is similar to mindful awareness except that it focuses on taking an entire regular routine that you are doing and immersing yourself within that routine. It supports the idea of being in the present and engaging wholly in whatever it is that you are doing instead of trying to rush through it to get to the next thing.

- To begin, as you are doing an activity (driving your car, cleaning the house, cooking a meal) decide that that activity is what you will use to practice this exercise.
- As you are doing the activity, you are taking in each aspect of what you are doing. For example, if you are cooking dinner, how do the ingredients feel and smell, what do your hands do as you are chopping, or get creative with what new ingredients might be good in the meal.



Mindful Appreciation

This is an exercise that takes some additional preparation and follow up compared to the others, but can be a powerful tool for staying present and bringing happiness in throughout the day.

As you go about your day, try to recognize 5 different things that do not usually get a second thought and keep track of what these things are on your phone or in a notebook. These things that you appreciate can be different for different people. It could be the soap you use to wash your hair, the way laundry smells, the dishwasher, or how your muscles work to let you walk or talk. As you are giving appreciation for these things, think about why they exist, what they do for you, what life would be like without these things, how these things are connected to other objects or events, and try to discover more about the things that you are appreciating.

Adapted from: pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/