

Introduction to Mindfulness



Introduction and Mindfulness of Breath

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of being in the present moment; living in the here and now. Being mindful increases your mind-body connection. This heightens your awareness of your thoughts, feelings and emotions, thus allowing you to live your life with greater attention, intention, and joy. When being mindful we view ourselves in a non-judgmental way, and compassionately attend to whatever arises in the moment. This means letting go of attachments of what you think your life “should” be and accepting what your life is. The foundation of a mindfulness practice is developing a connection to our breath. Each breath we take in and out naturally roots us to the present moment, inherently bringing us back to the here and now.

Principles of Mindfulness (Physiological)

Formal Practice:

Sitting meditation

Walking meditation

Informal Practice:

Mindfulness of daily activities – i.e. Eating, Driving, Chores, Parenting, Communicating, Personal Grooming, Sleeping

Approaches to Mindfulness (Psychological)

Awareness	Intention	Being in the present moment
Allowing	Attention	Friendliness to Self
Non-judgmental	Letting go	Attending to whatever arises
Patience	Trust	Acceptance

Mindfulness of Breath Techniques

Be in a comfortable, upright position, embodying awakefulness and integrity. Breathe naturally, trying not to alter or manipulate your breath, rather simply be aware of it, noticing where you feel it: at your nostrils, in your abdomen, etc... Focus your attention on *breathing in* and *breathing out*. You can say those words in your head, or count your breaths. When your mind wanders, gently invite it back to reconnect with your breathing. Don't judge or analyze where your mind has gone; just allow the breath to continue to flow in and out naturally. Practice this exercise of sitting and breathing for 5-10 minutes a day.

The Meaning of Aloha

ALO = sharing; in the present

OHA = joyous

HA = breath or life energy

Discover Your Intention

This sentence completion exercise may help identify and deepen your intentions with your Mindfulness practice. Please answer each question with the first thought that comes to you.

I want to practice Mindfulness because...

If I am more Mindful I hope I will...

The things I think will be easy to integrate are...

The things I think will be hard to integrate are...

Ultimately, mindfulness will give me...

Mindfulness is...

Suggested Readings

Wherever You Go, There You Are

By Jon Kabat-Zinn

Full Catastrophe Living

By Jon Kabat-Zinn

Everyday Blessings

By Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mindful Nation

By Tim Ryan

Mindsight

By Daniel Siegel

Buddha's Brain

By Rick Hanson

Just One Thing

By Rick Hanson

Hardwiring Happiness

By Rick Hanson

The Way of the Peaceful Warrior

By Dan Millman

The Law of Spirit

By Dan Millman

Dharma Punx

By Noah Levine

The Wise Heart

By Jack Kornfield

The Mindful Child

By Susan Kaiser Greenland

Mindful Eating

By Jan Chozen Bays

You are Here

Thich Nat Hanh