



# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS

## So what is mindfulness ?

Depending on which book you read or video you watch you will get a different version. Some want you to stop everything you have ever done and add an unreachable expectation that this will sort out everything for you. Can I just say the answer is NO it won't sort everything out, you won't live in a total world of Zen! What you will do is learn how to handle situations that life throws at you in a different kind of way, helping you stay a little more in control, just as importantly learn how to avoid some of those 'stressful' situations that you sometimes find yourself in.

It's about learning to live in the here and now and as a by-product of this means not get caught up in your own or others dramas. It helps to reduce and stop the negative chatter that goes on in your mind. But most important for me it helped me to find Calm and gave me back the **enjoyment** that I had lost in my life.

It felt like I had been given a freedom to live without the fears of 'What if' hanging over me constantly, the kind that stops you from living the life that you both wanted and deserve. It's stopped me behaving in a way that was not helpful to me or others, as I have learnt to just pause. It has given me the space to not always say 'What's in my Head!' as I've found that's not always that helpful!



WHAT IS

Mindfulness

TO YOU?

## **So what is mindfulness To YOU?**

So this is where it starts to get exciting, this is where we start to learn a little more about you and what you enjoy. The next three pages are looking at the things that you already do and enjoy or, if you are stuck with that look back at what you used to enjoy.

Often with this part we look at what made us 'happy' when we were younger, so good old school things like coloring or dot to dots, this is why I struggled to start with because we have been doing these things for years (well anybody who is as old as I am has anyway!)

Mindfulness is about bringing in your senses whenever you can, this is the key to bringing you back to the here and now, if you are able to tap into these it helps to slow down the part of the brain which is racing ( basically the trouble causing part.)

So I would like you to think about three activities (feel free to do more if you want to just print off more of their worksheets) Think about what brings you joy or calm or whatever the word and feeling is that you want to get from this activity

# How do we cultivate a Mindful way of being?

There are so many ways to practice mindfulness, sometimes I enjoy sitting in silence and listening to a guided meditation or just focusing on my breathing, this is what I would call a formal practice. Then on other days this feels like too much of a reach, it feels like I am getting more agitated even thinking about being still. This is the time when I tap into more of an informal practice, the moments when you are fully focused on a task in front of you.

These tasks are your daily routines or things that you enjoy and can lose yourself in. Think about the hobbies that you have or how do you spend your time. I absolutely love to be outside and tinkering in the garden, I love the creativity of designing new pots to show off the splendid colours of Spring and Summer, or sitting outside with my morning cup of tea simply enjoying feeling the rising sun on my face and listening to the songs of the birds.

Cultivate as many different ways that you can practice mindfulness, make them part of your daily routines allowing them to become second nature, giving you the opportunity to allow your mind to enjoy some stillness and calm.

## Formal practice:

Mindful breathing, meditation or other mindful meditation where you can practice daily.

Mindful body scan 3 to 4 times a week

## Informal practice:

Practicing daily activities and tasks with full focus and attention on the task, e.g. brushing teeth, doing the dishes, taking a walk.

Noticing sun on your face, feeling the water fall on your body whilst showering.



# Living in the Here and Now

Zen Buddhists believe that being able to live in the here and now is the closest that we can get to bliss. If we can learn (over time) to give ourselves up completely to the smallest of tasks, such as washing our face in the shower, chopping vegetables or wiping down the kitchen tops, with all of our focus, totally absorbed in what we are doing, with no worries or thoughts then this is as close to peace as we can get.

There is a difference between fully present and enjoying the process feeling it as you go and totally zoning out and switching off. This is something that can be learnt and practiced daily in small moments at a time. This is not meant to be a permanent state of mind as it will just seem like its too impossible to achieve (very few people can ever reach this stage) so please do not see this as a defeat or a negative, If you have a favourite hobby that you get totally absorbed in then you will recognise this state of being, this is where we are aiming for, everything is around finding a balance.



# MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

1



MINDFUL BREATHING

Focus on your breath, count your breaths, and be aware of your breath going in and out.

Take a few moments to think of something that you are grateful for and really let the feeling of gratitude sink in.



GRATITUDE PRACTICE

2

3



POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Take time to repeat positive affirmations to yourself, such as "I am capable of achieving my goals" or "I am strong and capable."

Take time to sit in stillness and focus on your breath or repeat a mantra to yourself.



MEDITATION

4

5



BODY SCAN

Focus your attention on different parts of your body and notice the sensations as you move through each one.

# Mindful Walking

There is nothing better than being able to be outside and enjoy fresh air, its a scientific fact that getting outside for 15 minute's a day has a profound benefit on your Mental Health. By this I do not mean dashing from one place to the other, juggling telephone conversations or thinking about your 'to do' list. I mean actually being outside, slowing down and starting to notice everything around you.

Its about walking at a normal to slow pace, feeling the souls of your feet on the ground, allow your shoulders to drop and relax, noticing your breath both in and out. Start to notice how your body is feeling, is it stiff or relaxed? do you feel light or heavy? just notice as you walk, make no judgment, just feeling the souls of your feet connecting to the ground with each step.

Slowly start to notice your surroundings, the colour of the sky, the light that is getting through the trees, are there any clouds in the sky? notice their shapes.

Enjoy the fresh air as it enters your body is this warm or cold? what noises can you hear? the sound of the birds? back to noticing those feet as you take those slow steps forward.

The idea is to just be, see and feel your environment really 'BE' in the moment allowing all other thoughts to just disappear. This can take a little time to master and some days are easier than others, start small with a moment of stillness a moment of 'Being' and over time you can slowly grown this.

Most of all learn to enjoy these moments of tranquillity away from the rushing of thoughts to become part of the stillness around you.



# Noticing & Observing Your Thoughts

One of the biggest benefits of mindfulness is to help you and your mind find some peace and calm, from the constant whizzing thoughts that at times feel like they might never stop.

The key to this is to learn to start to observe your thoughts. Imagine being sat at the side of a very busy road, your safe on an embankment and are just '**watching**' the vehicles as they whizz pass.

These vehicles symbolise your thoughts as they go rushing past, in the real world you would never run into the road to try to slow everything down and make it stop, however this is what we try to do with our thoughts, we want to unpack each thought, try to '**understand**' what they are saying. Most importantly we '**Believe**' every thought is real.

Being mindful is about '**noticing**' your thoughts and like the observer at the side of the road letting that thought pass without getting caught up to it.



# Help with Anxiety Relief



**TAKE A  
MINDFUL  
WALK**



**HAVE A WARM  
BATH OR  
SHOWER**



**LISTEN TO A  
BIRD  
SINGING**



**ENJOY A  
WARM DRINK**



**WRITE OR  
JOURNAL**



**ENJOY TIME  
IN NATURE**



**LIGHT  
CANDLES**



**LISTEN TO  
MUSIC**



**FOCUS ON  
YOUR  
BREATHING**



**FAVOURITE  
HOBBY**



**MEDITATION**



**LISTEN TO THE  
SOUND OF  
THE RAIN**



# How to Do a Body Scan Meditation

## Get comfortable

Slowly return back to the room, wiggle your toes, open your eyes

Close your eyes & focus on your breathing

Allow yourself to be in this place of calm.

Starting at the crown of your head bring attention to this area



Spend 20-30 seconds just noticing any sensations

Allowing any tension to melt away from your body.

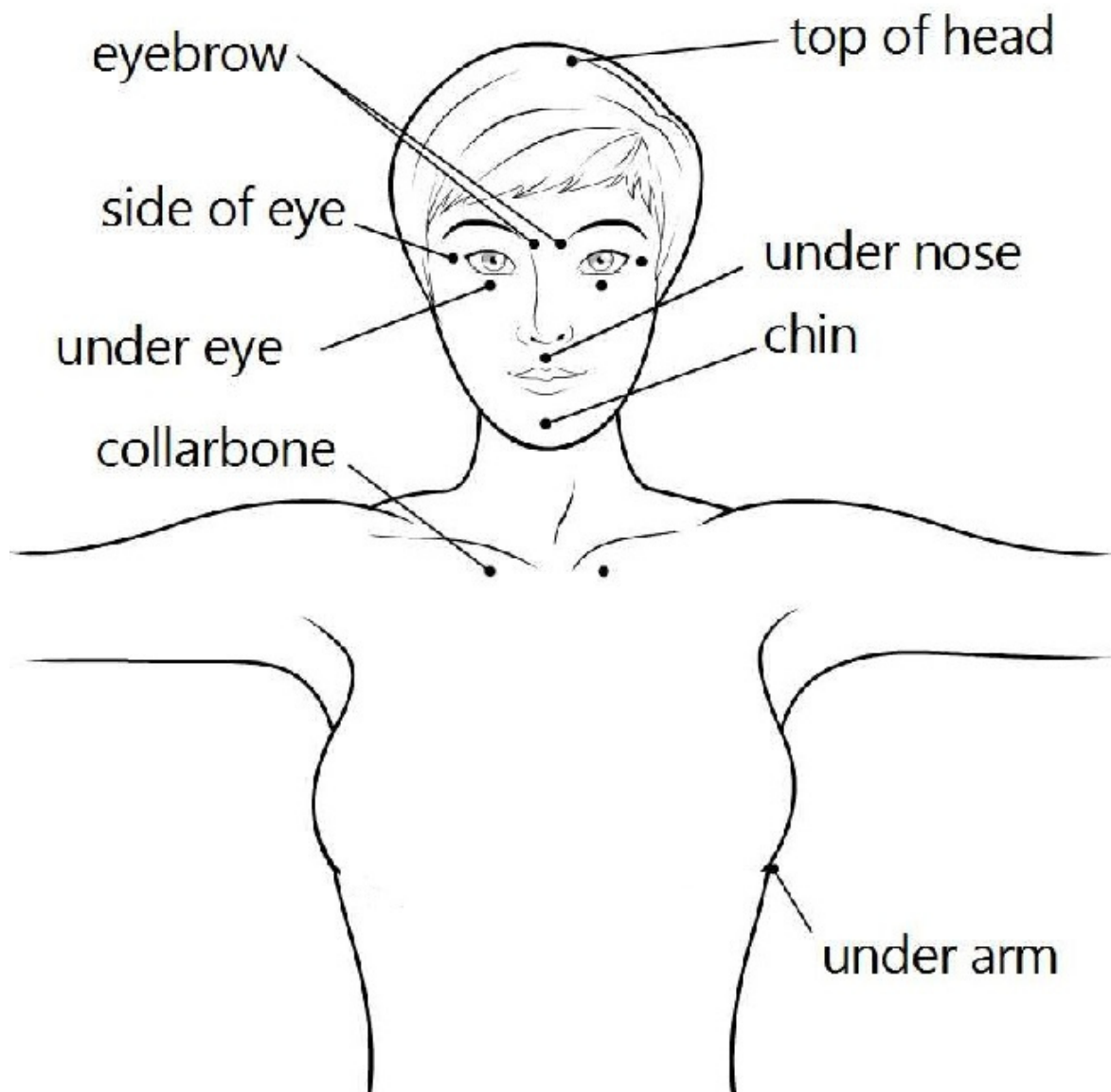
If your mind wanders very gently bring your thoughts back

Slowly move from area to area throughout your body.

# HOW TO TAP

At first, you may not get the points exactly. Beginners often use 2-3 fingers so as to tap a wider zone. It may also help to ask a therapist or experienced tapper to show you exactly where they are.

## Tapping Points





## Choose a reminder phrase.

This is a phrase that brings on the negative emotion you hope to dispel. In the case of grief, it may be something like, “Even though I feel such deep grief,” “Even though I’m really struggling with this loss,” “Even though I feel this loss in my body and in my life,” “Even though I feel so lonely,” “I honour how my body feels and I give it permission to relax, I recognise how hard this has been and I find more ease during this difficult time. I give myself permission to relax.”

Remember that the whole point is to focus on this pain or painful emotion. Sometimes the trauma from a memory is too upsetting to bring to mind. In this case, just use the words “that terrible thing that happened” or similar wording.

Start by **tapping the karate chop point** and repeating your reminder phrase. The reason we start with the karate chop point is that it's associated with psychological reversals, and that's what we're doing here – reversing a negative thought or belief about yourself. Say the set-up phrase three times while tapping five to seven times.