

*Meditation does not involve trying to change your thinking by thinking some more. It involves watching thought itself. The watching is the holding. By watching your thoughts without being drawn into them, you can learn something profoundly liberating about thinking itself, which may help you to be less of a prisoner of those thought patterns—often so strong in us— which are narrow inaccurate, and self-involved.*

*Another way to look at meditation is to view the process of thinking itself as a waterfall, a continual cascading of thought. In cultivating mindfulness, we are going beyond or behind our thinking. We still see and hear the water, but we are out of the torrent.*

Jon Kabat-Zinn  
*Wherever You Go, there You Are.*



# Stress Less at Work: Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation

## **Mindfulness:**

Paying attention, on purpose, in the moment (without judgement).  
Moment-to-moment awareness.

Mindfulness is the practice of cultivating non-judgmental awareness in day-to-day life. It develops the potential to experience each moment, no matter how difficult or intense, with greater serenity and clarity. Mindfulness meditation can help one feel better, sleep better, and increase ability to cope with stressful situations, improve self-esteem and renew enthusiasm for life and work. One can feel more alive, joyful and gain immediate access to powerful inner resources for improving health and healing.

Over the past 35 years scientists have concluded that mindfulness meditation can benefit health issues such as:

- Stress — job, family, financial
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Sleep disorders
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Fear and anxiety
- GI distress
- Chronic pain
- Chronic illnesses (fibromyalgia, crohns, MS)

## Try this!

- **Breathe:** Take 5 or 10 minutes out of your day to bring awareness to your breath. Pay attention to the physical sensations of the breath moving into and out of the body. If possible, **choose the same place and time to do this each day.** If it helps you to concentrate, try counting the breath after each exhalation. Notice how you are feeling before and after you practice this.
- Try to pay attention to when you are on automatic pilot. What pulls you away from the present moment? Are you thinking about the past or are you thinking about the future? How did it make you feel? What thoughts, body sensations and emotions came up for you when you were on automatic pilot?

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Mindfulness Programs for Healthy Living

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# In Focus

## Mindful Practice: Self Care

### Working with Stress at Work

- 1 Take a moment from time to time to monitor your bodily sensations.** Is there tension in your shoulders, face, hands or back? How are you sitting or standing in this moment? What is your body language saying? Consciously let go of any tension as best you can as you exhale and shift your posture in one that expresses balance, dignity, and alertness.
- 2 When you find yourself walking at work, take the edge off it. Walk mindfully.** Don't rush unless you have to. If you have to, know that you are rushing. Rush mindfully!
- 3 Use any breaks to truly relax.** Try neck and shoulder rolls at your desk. Or shut your office door if you can and sit quietly for five minutes or so, following your breathing.
- 4 Lunchtime:** Spend your breaks and lunchtime with people you feel comfortable with. Otherwise, maybe it would be better for you to be alone. Changing your environment at lunch can be helpful. Choose to eat one or two lunches per week in silence, mindfully. **Alternatively** go out and exercise a few days a week at lunchtime if you can. If you can do it, it is a wonderful way to clear the mind, reduce tension and start fresh in the afternoon with a lot of energy.
- 5 Try to stop for one minute every hour** and become aware of your breathing. Use these mini-meditations to tune in to the present and just be. Use them as moments in which to regroup and recoup. All it takes is remembering to do it!
- 6 Use everyday cues in your environment** as reminders to center yourself and relax—the telephone ringing, waiting for someone else to finish something before you can start. Instead of relaxing by “spacing out,” relax by tuning in.
- 7 Be mindful of your communications with people during the work day.** Are they satisfactory? Are some problematic? Think about how you might improve them. Be aware of people who tend to operate in a passive mode or a hostile mode with you. Think about how you might approach them more effectively. Think about how you might be more sensitive to other people's feelings and needs. How might awareness of tone of voice and body language help you with communication?
- 8 At the end of the day, review what you have accomplished and congratulate yourself.** Make a list of what needs to be done tomorrow. Prioritize the items on your list so that you know what is most important and you can begin your day in a calm and balance.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living