

## Attachment in Psychotherapy

Each day brings plenty of opportunities for mindfulness – from washing the dishes to waiting in traffic. Here are 6 ways to stay mindful through the day. Mindfulness involves being aware of your surroundings as well as what you are feeling inside. Mindfulness can have mental health benefits, with researchers in a 2021 study reporting that people who practiced mindful meditation during lockdown self-reported less pandemic-related stress than those who didn't. Practicing mindfulness as part of your everyday life can have benefits both for the mind and the body. Incorporating mindfulness into your everyday life doesn't need to be difficult, and can be as simple as daily mindful breathing exercises.

What is mindfulness? The American Psychological Association defines mindfulness as a sense of awareness of one's surroundings, as well as one's internal state of being. A mindfulness practice can help people acknowledge their thoughts and feelings in a healthy way and enable them to avoid habits or behaviors that might be destructive or unhelpful. Mindfulness can be used as a tool in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), meditation, and stress reduction exercises. Modern mindfulness practices commonly include a focus on meditation, relaxation, attention, and on observing passing thoughts. When you start to practice mindfulness, you may notice that each moment brings an opportunity for mindful presence.

1. When you wake up When you wake up in the morning, you can spend a few minutes checking in with yourself. How do you feel? What emotions are there? Do you feel any physical aches or pains? If so, you might take a moment to stretch in a way that feels good. You could also consider adding a walk to your morning routine, taking time to notice the trees and houses that you see along the way. A morning journaling routine can also help you get acquainted with what's going on in your head.

2. Regular mindful breathing To help you stay present throughout the day, it might help to turn toward your breath. Mindful breathing simply involves focusing your thoughts on the breath coming in and leaving your body. You might focus on the sensation of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils, or the rising and falling of your breath in your belly or chest. Whatever feels right for you. It's not always easy to focus on the breath, as our minds love to flit between different thoughts. If you notice your mind wandering, gently bring it back to the breath. If you'd like to make mindful breathing a daily routine, it can help to set a reminder on your phone a few times a day, or make a plan to spend some time focusing on your breath every day before making dinner. You could also try breathing exercises, such as deep breathing and the 4-7-8 method methods, that may help to slow your heart rate and calm your nervous system.

3. Focus on your senses Another great way to bring mindfulness into your daily life is by making a point of focusing on sensations. You can do this at any time. All it takes is turning your attention toward what's going on around you. Everyday ways to practice mindfulness and focus on your senses include: when washing, focus on the sensation of warm, soapy bubbles on your skin and the

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smell of the soap

when walking, pay attention to how your feet feel connecting with the pavement, and the sway of your arms and body as you move

when eating or drinking, focus on the textures, flavors, and sensations that come with each mouthful. If you feel discomfort somewhere, it can help to mentally zoom in to where your body is holding that feeling. The shoulders, back, and jaw are common areas that carry tension. Does it feel tight? Sharp? Dull? Then, you might gradually try to let the tension go. You can also try grounding exercises, like the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, which allow you to connect with the world around you. This involves letting your attention rest on: five things you see

four things you hear

three things you smell

two things you touch

one thing you taste

4. Mindful intimacy Practicing mindful intimacy can be a way to focus on your own body, your partner's, and your mutual experience moment by moment. This can involve observing, expressing, and listening to passing mutual desires, while showing curiosity, gentleness, and acceptance, according to Dorian Solot, co-author of *I Love Female Orgasm: An Extraordinary Orgasm Guide*. "Whatever you're doing, from kissing on, try offering your partner Option A or Option B. Once you are aware of their preference you can add modifications or other options," she says.

5. Mindfulness while you wait Waiting in line at the supermarket, doctor's office, or traffic light? This could be another opportunity to get mindful. As you sit and wait, instead of defaulting to looking at your phone, you might take a few deep breaths and focus in on what's around you. What interesting things can you see around you? What smells are in the air? What can you hear? You might find that even one-minute mindfulness exercises can make a difference to your mind and mood through the day.

6. Schedule a daily meditation session Taking time to sit still for a meditation session is the cornerstone of mindfulness for many folks. You might devote 5 minutes, 20 minutes, or longer to sit quietly in a comfortable spot and tune in to a mindful state. Many people use guided meditations to help them get into the zone. If you're not sure where to start, various meditation apps can help you learn to meditate at home — apps like Calm and Headspace. Many apps help you keep track of your meditation, providing an incentive to keep up your practice each day. There are many types of meditation, including: chanting meditation

loving-kindness meditation

zen meditation A mindful game might also work for you. A 2019 study suggested that a mindfulness video game called Tenacity could increase the focused attention in adolescents.

How to make mindfulness a habit Starting a new habit can be tough. Here are some ways to make your mindfulness practice a regular part of your life. Develop mindfulness rituals and prompts Your routines can be everyday things like walking or cooking. If you choose to do your routines mindfully, you can deliberately pay attention to when, how, why, and what you're feeling while you're doing them. Having special prompts may help you recall your intentions. You may use a beautiful journal to capture your morning thoughts, or put a candle on your desk and light it before starting work as a call to work mindfully. Establish your anchors If you begin to feel uncomfortable or off-center, you might consider using a mindfulness anchor — something that keeps you grounded and brings you back to the present moment. This could mean: Turning your focus to your breath, and taking a few deep, mindful breaths.

Checking in with your senses. What are you feeling, smelling, and hearing right now?

Doing a body scan, where you pay attention to each part of your body in turn, from your head to your toes.

Reminding yourself that whatever you're feeling right now is temporary, and like all emotions you've had before, it will pass. Find accountability partners You may find it beneficial to: check in with a mindful friend once a day

track your mindfulness habits in a journal

receive daily reminders or affirmations from meditation apps Find a supportive community Travis Spencer, MA, DC-based

mindfulness instructor and therapist, says to look for people who can: accept you as you are

call you out as necessary

show love and respect despite differences

## Reference

[In a House of Dreams and Glass: Becoming a Psychiatrist](#)

[Cannabis Pharmacy: The Practical Guide to Medical Marijuana -- Revised and Updated](#)