



**connect**

wellbeing, ability, recovery

# MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

These mindfulness exercises are designed to develop your ability to stay in the present moment and they are a great way to improve your ability to concentrate.

Ideally, mindfulness is something that you will learn to integrate into all moments of your daily life. But for now why not start with one or more of the below....

## Exercise 1: One Mindful Minute

This simple mindfulness exercise is one that you can do anytime throughout the day.

Take a moment ..... Check your watch and note the time. For the next 60 seconds try to focus all your attention on your breathing. Just your breathing. Just for one minute. Keep your eyes open and breathe normally. Your mind will start to wander but be ready to catch it and refocus on your breathing.

This mindfulness exercise is far more powerful - and challenging - than most people think. Remember, you can't fail at this exercise, you can only experience it.

Use this exercise as many times as you need throughout the day to restore your mind to the present moment and to restore your mind to clarity and peace.

## Exercise 2: Conscious Observation

Pick up an object that you have close to you. Anything will do...a book, pen or cup for example. Hold it in your hands and allow your attention to be fully absorbed by the object. Observe it. Don't assess it or think about it, or study it intellectually. Just observe it for what it is.

Through this exercise you'll feel a sense of heightened "nowness". Conscious observation can enhance your feeling of "being awake". Notice how your mind quickly releases thoughts of past or future, and how different it feels to be in the moment. Conscious observation is a form of meditation. It's subtle, but powerful. Try it..

You can also practice conscious observation with your ears rather than your eyes. Many people find that mindful listening is a more powerful mindfulness technique than visual observation.



## Exercise 3: Count to Ten

This is more of an exercise in practicing concentration than it is in mindfulness. Just close your eyes and focus your attention on slowly counting to ten. If your concentration wanders of, be ready to catch it and start back at number one! For most people, it goes something like this...

“One...two...three...did I finish that report or are there changes needed? Oh, whoops, I’m thinking.”

“One...two...three...four...this isn’t so hard after all... Oh no....that’s a thought! Start again.”

“One...two...three... now I’ve got it. I’m really concentrating now...”

## Exercise 4: Mindfulness Cues

In this exercise you use environmental cause to trigger you to focus your attention on your breathing. For example, whenever you hear the phone ring, you promptly bring your attention into the present moment and stay focused on your breath.

Simply choose a cue that works for you. Perhaps you will choose to become mindful every time you look in the mirror or wash your hands or every time you hear a bird.

Mindfulness cues are an excellent mindfulness technique that are designed to snap you out of the unconscious “autopilot” state of mind and bring you back into the present moment.



## Frank's three minute breather

- Begin by sitting upright if possible on your seat
- Notice contact with the floor, left foot on the floor, right foot on the floor
- Now bring your attention to contact with your seat, notice how the seat supports your body, notice the points of contact between your body and your seat
- Lower your shoulders, head upright
- Now as you ease into your body, your body softens, lengthens. Notice contact with your clothing against your skin
- Now bring your attention to your breath, notice how you breathe: no right way, no wrong way. Let your attention rest on your breath
- Notice where your 'in breath' begins and track it to where you notice your 'in breath' end
- Then notice where your outbreath begins and track your outbreath to where your outbreath ends
- The natural sound of the breath is, "Soooooo" as you breathe in and, "Haaaaaaaaa" as you breathe out - like the sound of the ebb and flow of the waves as they roll up to the shore and return to the ocean
- Being with your breath is an anchor that allows the stress response to settle naturally and brings us back to the Here and Now

(taken from 'C'eeing is Believing by F.Liddy)





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