

Mindfulness



What is Mindfulness:

Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, says that mindfulness means knowing directly what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment (NHS).

Why try to become more mindful?

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. It benefits everyone! Awareness of this kind also helps us notice signs of stress or anxiety earlier and helps us deal with them better. Mindfulness is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) as a way to prevent depression in people who have had 3 or more bouts of depression in the past.

Things you can do to help you become more mindful

Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness.

Notice the Everyday:

Sometimes we're so busy in our day to day lives for forget to appreciate the simple things, like a bird song or a piece of art. Take some time to soak up something around you.

Build mindful activities into your day:

This could be something like a 30-minute yoga session, but that's not for everyone. Walks are also great for mindful moments.

Try Something New:

Try to do something you're not used to, this is an easy way to engage in being mindful, because your body isn't accustomed to the different experience. This could be a hobby or new type of food.

Don't Hold too Tightly Old Feelings:

Mindful people are able to reframe their mood and judgements about things quickly because they take time to challenge those old thoughts. Remember to forgive yourself and others often.

Eat slowly:

Mindfulness is about engaging with all of the senses, and nothing uses our senses more than eating. Take time to really savour the smell, flavour, texture, look and sounds of food

Put your phone away:

Mobiles are great for so many things, but they aren't good for helping us be more mindful. Schedule in at least half an hour without your phone. It won't hurt, promise!

Think about your thoughts:

This can be a hard one, but try to remind yourself every now and then to slow down your thought patterns and really figure out what it is you're thinking about. Reflect on if your doing something mindfully or not.

Think about your body when you exercise:

Exercising by itself is great, it makes you happy naturally! However, you can extend the positiveness that comes from exercise by being mindful about the way your body feels when you exercise. Think about your muscles every time they flex or tense up.

Talk to someone that you can trust:

If you are struggling with the sorts of things Mindfulness can help you through, and you need some support there is lots of information and help available for you

Helplines and services available:

Samaritans www.samaritans.org Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

Childline www.childline.org.uk Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

Kooth: Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people www.kooth.com

Shout: Free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis www.giveusashout.org Text 85258

The Mix: Free information and support for under 25s in the UK 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk