

Mindfulness Techniques

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

Mindfulness is easy to practice throughout your workday. These mindfulness exercises will keep you happier, calmer, and more focused at the office and can have a positive effect on your overall mental health.

1. Mindful appreciation

Mindful appreciation is a simple exercise that can help you feel more content through your workday. With mindful appreciation, you take a few minutes to think about everything in your daily life that you normally take for granted. For example, you can think about your cozy comforter, your beautiful car, your sweet cat, or the amazing space heater near your desk. Just think about these things and what they add to your life. Imagine not having them, and how much that would impact your daily life.

2. Mindful breathing

Mindful breathing is a meditation technique that is a great way to start your day. Mindful breathing can also help you at work. Just repeat the exercise a few times per day while seated at your desk. Block out a few minutes when you can devote yourself to nothing but you're breathing. Breathe in slowly, taking about three seconds to draw a breath, and then exhale slowly. Breathe in through your nose, then exhale through your mouth. Don't think about anything except your breathing. When stray thoughts come into your mind, just push them back out again and stay focused on your breath. Keep your head as clear as possible during this exercise. Start with doing two or three minutes of mindful breathing and work your way up to sessions of five to ten minutes. Use the longer sessions for the beginning and the end of the day, taking quick breaks at your desk for a few short breathing sessions.

3. Take breaks

Your brain starts to get a little foggy after too much time on one task. Taking breaks can help you maintain a state of mindfulness by giving your brain a little break to reset. Breaks help your brain digest information, and when you return to a task after a short break you can feel a renewed sense of focus. Working for long stretches that are too long can decrease your productivity and make you more error prone. Practice mindfulness by taking short breaks at your desk or even by going for a walk for a few minutes.

4. Mindful immersion

Rushing through tasks as quickly as possible is stressful and can lead to errors in your work. When you practice mindful immersion, you let go of everything except the feeling of the tasks you're engaged in at the moment. Instead of being distracted by thoughts of how quickly you can get this task completed so you can move on to the next thing, stop and savour the moment. Make a conscious decision to focus on what you're doing. Enjoy the sensations of the physicality of what you're doing at the moment, and don't allow your mind to wander toward the other items on your agenda. Don't worry about your inbox or start going over the key points of the upcoming department meeting. By using mindful immersion, you'll enjoy a feeling of being content in the moment while achieving a higher level of focus. Practicing this exercise throughout your workday can reduce your anxiety level.

5. Mindful focus

It goes against the status quo of constant multitasking that we see in every aspect of our lives these days but focusing on one thing at a time is actually more beneficial. When you multitask, you make more errors, take longer to learn a subject, and actually get less done. Multitasking is bad for your brain because it increases your stress level and reduces your ability to focus. Your heart rate increases when you're multitasking. To practice mindful focus, you'll need to leave multitasking behind and learn to take on one activity at a time. By learning to work on one task at a time, you'll increase your mindfulness by strengthening your ability to focus for longer periods. Push distractions out of your mind and stay on one task at a time, thinking only about what you're doing in the moment. Teach yourself to appreciate the activities you engage in while you're actually

doing them. You'll find that this mindfulness technique can improve the quality of your work and can even give you a new appreciation of the task itself.

6. Mindfulness techniques for work

It's easy to practice mindfulness at work when you familiarize yourself with some useful techniques and make a decision to put them into practice. These mindfulness techniques can help you reduce stress and foster a more positive attitude toward your workday. You'll be happier in the moment, and you'll feel more relaxed both at work and in your free time.

7. Practice acceptance

Practicing acceptance during your workday can help you get past unpleasant situations. It's not realistic to try to go through life without feeling some negative emotions creep in, and the best thing you can do is take control when this happens.

If you find yourself feeling stressed out or upset by circumstances at the office, you can move on more easily when you decide to accept the feelings you're having. Acceptance will allow your mind to work toward a solution. Instead of dwelling on what's bothering you, be mindful about it by teaching yourself to acknowledge it and accept it so you can get back to your content state.

8. Engage in active listening

Active listening is a skill that will serve you well in all areas of your life, not only at the office. Active listening can help your performance at work, but it can also improve your relationships. Active listening is one of the best ways you can incorporate mindfulness into your workday. First, make sure the person you're talking to knows that you're giving them your undivided attention. You can do this by maintaining eye contact and avoiding distractions like glancing at your phone. Nod, smile, or shake your head at appropriate times to signal your attentiveness. Listen to what the speaker is saying. Try not to assume that you know what points the person is making before they make them. Don't compose your response in your mind before they're even finished talking. There's nothing wrong with pausing to think before you respond, when it's your turn to talk. Pay attention to your body language and make sure you're not giving off-putting signs like turning slightly away from the speaker. Ask questions and provide

other verbal cues to show that you're following along and that you're interested. Let the person finish talking before you respond. Avoid the temptation to interrupt and correct a statement that you disagree with. Don't turn conversations into an opportunity to talk about yourself. Most people are good at being able to discern whether someone is actually listening to what they're saying. If you're anxiously waiting for your turn to talk and not really listening, people will catch on pretty quickly. Always be polite and respect the other person's opinions. Active listening is one of the most useful mindfulness techniques you can use to help you at the office.

9. Mindfully unplug

Unplug from the distractions of daily life, such as radios, televisions, cell phones, and email, so you can move through your day in a more mindful state. These distractions can make you more impatient and forgetful while adding to the stress in your life. Spend time unplugged from technology to do breathing exercises, go for a walk, or complete a task at your desk. Spending some unplugged time at work can boost your productivity and make you feel more relaxed. It's counterproductive to try to get work done while constantly monitoring email and responding to texts.

Unplug in your car on the way home by turning off the radio. Enjoy the silence and take the time to clear your head, focusing on your breathing and the feeling of your hands on the steering wheel. These mindfulness techniques and exercises are easy to add to your workday so you can reduce stress, improve your productivity, and boost your overall contentment.