



Looking for a new way to reduce stress or **develop greater personal awareness?**

If so, you may be interested in practicing mindfulness meditation!

The goal of mindfulness is to be aware of the present moment, free from judgment and overthinking. Mastering mindfulness can take practice, but once you start, you may begin to notice benefits immediately. Read on to learn more!



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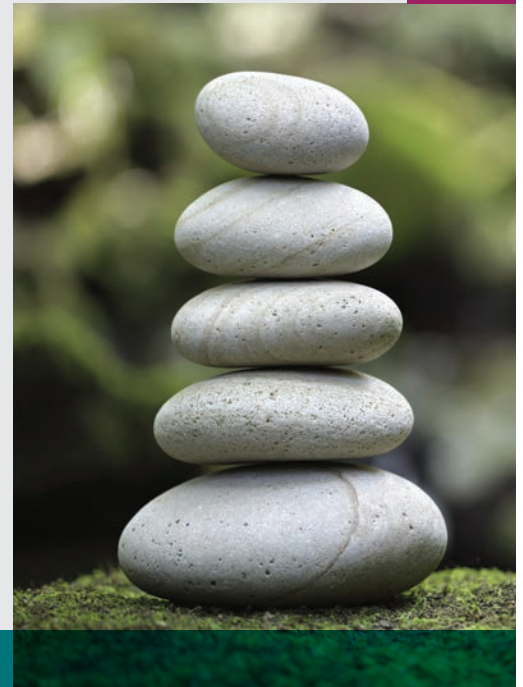
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Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness can help alleviate negative emotions such as stress, anxiety and sadness, which can result in better moods and less negative self-talk. Other benefits can include increased focus and mental energy from being “freed” from compulsive thoughts and worry.

Let's Practice!

1. **Plan about 10 minutes of time to start.** There is no standard amount of time required to practice. Nevertheless, the longer you're able to meditate, generally the greater the results. Add time as you begin to perfect your practice.
2. **Practice in a quiet place** where you'll be comfortable simply sitting relaxed with your back straight.
3. **Calm your breathing.** Proper breathing is called “belly breathing.” You must breathe down to your diaphragm in order to belly breathe. You should feel your abdomen expand as you inhale and contract as you exhale.
4. **Develop a mantra.** Think of a word, phrase, picture or sensation on which you would like to concentrate. As you continue to belly breathe, repeat your mantra in your head. You will find your mind wander to different thoughts and ideas. Embrace these thoughts and the sensations they produce. Mantras can also be visualizations such as landscapes and activities. They can also be sensations including feelings of warmth, relaxation, and well-being.
5. As you **repeat your mantra**, you will begin to notice outside thoughts and feelings. Consider the waves of sensations and feelings without judging them or becoming preoccupied by the thoughts. If you find yourself getting off track, refocus your breathing and your mantra.
6. When you're ready to end your meditation, **bring yourself back to the present** by focusing on just your breath for several minutes.



Mindfulness Tips

- Practice makes perfect. It may take you a few tries to start to feel the benefits of mindfulness.
- Be patient. Cultivating mindfulness in all situations requires time and a personal investment. The more you put into your meditations, the more you will gain from them.
- As you begin to expand your practice, you may also notice yourself becoming mindful outside of your meditation sessions.
- To further your mindfulness, play close attention to detail in all situations.

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