

# Mindfulness and Relaxation Resources

## So, what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is defined as a type of meditation in which you focus on your present moment towards your thoughts, feelings, and the world around you, to help improve your mental wellbeing.

## Why mindfulness is important?

It is easy to stop noticing the world around us and it is very easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling. Too often we can get caught up in our own thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are influencing our behaviour and emotions. Mindfulness is important because it enables us to reconnect with our bodies, feelings and the sensations we experience, through focusing on our emotions, sounds, smells, sights and tastes.

When we are mindful, we gain insight and awareness through observing our own mind; we reduce our stress levels, enhance our performance, and increase our attention to the world around us. Self-awareness also helps us to notice signs of anxiety or stress earlier on and as a result, helps us to deal with these emotions quicker and more efficiently. Therefore, mindfulness practises increase our ability to regulate emotions, decrease stress, anxiety and depression by paying attention to our own thoughts and feelings without judgement.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

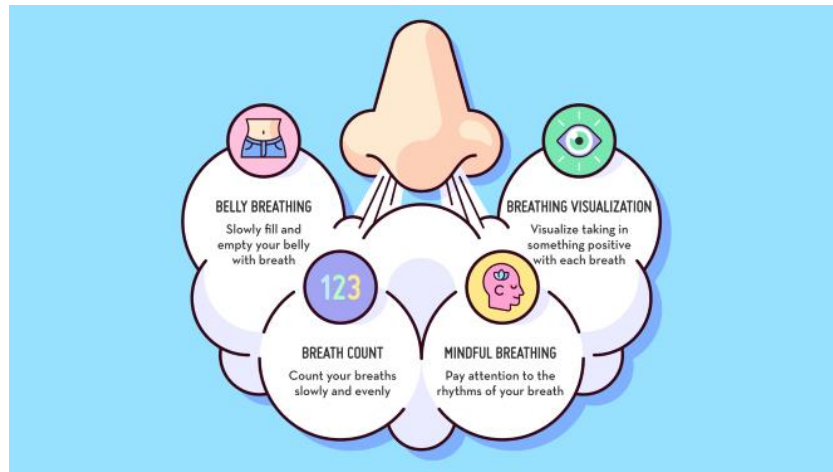
## How to be mindful

Here are a few tips on how you can implement mindfulness to your every-day life. It is important to recognise that mindfulness works differently for everybody.

1. **Mindful Breathing** – When you have negative thoughts, try to sit down, take a deep breath and close your eyes. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help.
2. **Slow Down** – It's hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Try to take the time to experience your environment with all of your senses — touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favourite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.
3. **Move** – Whether it's running, walking, or even stretching at your desk, become aware of your body's sensations.
4. **Try something new** – Trying new things, such as going somewhere new for lunch, can help you to gain new experiences, and notice the world in a new way.
5. **Appreciate the little things** – Focus your attention onto the pleasures of life, no matter how small they are. It is too easy to take things for granted or miss them altogether.

## Two Minute Mindful Breathing Exercise:

1. **Settle.** Begin by taking a moment to settle in a comfortable position. You can close your eyes or look down to limit visual distractions.
2. **Relax.** See if you can notice any areas of physical tightness or tension. That might mean dropping your shoulders, wiggling your fingers, loosening your jaw, softening the muscles around the eyes, or relaxing the belly.
3. **Check-in.** Noticing where your body touches the ground or the chair. What does it feel like to have the weight of gravity pulling you down?
4. **Breathe.** Inhale through the nose, and exhale through the mouth.
5. **Notice.** Observe the pause in between each inhalation and exhalation. Notice the sensation of the air as it passes through the nostrils and mouth. You might even notice the belly rising and falling with each inhale and each exhale.



### Mindful

### Walking:

1. **Find Space.** Mindful walking can be performed indoors, but also works well out in nature.
2. **Check-in.** Before you begin moving, perform a quick check in with your body. Notice the sensation of the soles of your feet on the floor and how your weight is distributed.
3. **Notice.** As you slowly begin to walk, notice the sensation of your body as you move through space. You can also be aware of the noises and smells around you, but primarily focus on the feeling of your gait. Much like the breath is an anchor in a seated breathing practice; your footsteps become the anchor in walking meditation.

### Resources

These websites have a good overview on mindfulness and relaxation exercises.

NHS - Mindfulness: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/tips-and-support/mindfulness/>

NHS - 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

NHS – Mental Wellbeing audio guides: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

Mindful Breathing Exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=wfDTp2GogaQ>

Mindful Exercises: <https://mindfulness-exercises.com/8-mindfulness-exercises-for-beginners/>

What is Mindfulness?: <https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/>

Age UK: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/mindfulness/>






Some local charities have mindfulness and relaxation recordings that you can access online:

Penny Brohn UK: <https://www.pennybrohn.org.uk/resources/>

Dorothy House: <https://www.dorothyhouse.org.uk/resources/relaxation-recordings/>

In Addition, there are Mindfulness Apps available to download from play store (google play) on android devices and from the app store on an iPhone/iPad. Here are a selection of popular apps you could try; many apps have free trials. Information correct on the 02.11.2020

| App   | Cost  | Description (from App websites)   |
|---|---|---|
|  Calm app<br><a href="https://www.calm.com">https://www.calm.com</a>   | Several weeks free subscription and optional subscription £28.99/year iOS/Android | Music tracks are engineered to help you focus, relax or sleep, such as Calm Body – a series of 10-minute guided videos on mindful movement and several Sleep Stories.   |
|  Headspace App<br><a href="https://www.headspace.com">https://www.headspace.com</a>  | Free download, then optional subscription £9.99/month, £44.99/year, iOS/Android.  | The app is a great choice if you want to learn the essentials of meditation and mindfulness, with a free 10-part “basics” course. The sessions, which come in three, five or 10-minute chunks, are easy to follow, focusing on breathing and scanning through the body to check in on how you feel.       |
|  Velindre Cancer Centre mindfulness app  | Free  | The Velindre Mindfulness App has been created by Velindre Cancer Centre and is intended for all patients who may benefit from Mindfulness and Relaxation exercises to improve mental health and wellbeing before, during or after hospital treatment.   |
|  3- minute mindfulness<br><a href="http://www.threeminutemindfulness.com">www.threeminutemindfulness.com</a>   | Only on iPhone. Premium costs £6.99 per month. £35.99 for a year.                 | 3 Minute Mindfulness was designed to make Mindfulness as quick, easy and accessible as possible. The app contains meditations, breathing exercises and courses to help you relax, reduce anxiety and improve sleep.   |
|  Stop, Breathe & Think<br><a href="http://www.stopbreathethink.com">www.stopbreathethink.com</a>   | Free download, optional subscription £9.99/month, £54.99/year                     | This app uses short, guided meditations or yoga, from five-minute “joy” sessions, to longer practices to help you deal with anxiety or to relax, ground and clear your head. You get 30 free activities, with more than 100 others available if you upgrade to premium, including some acupuncture videos |
|  Hope- Christian Meditation-<br><a href="http://www.hopemindfulness.com">www.hopemindfulness.com</a>   | Free foundation package- then £8 a month/ £57 a year.                             | There are 12 free meditations that explain the basics of how to meditate and pray. By Spending only 10 mins a day you can create a positive spiritual habit that will last a lifetime   |
|  Reflect- Christian App<br><a href="https://download.cnet.com/Reflect-Christian-Mindfulness/3000-31713_4-77748315.html">https://download.cnet.com/Reflect-Christian-Mindfulness/3000-31713_4-77748315.html</a> | Free  | This app contains reflections and meditations based on the Christian principles of biblical meditation and contemplative prayer. There are four pieces of relaxing music that you add as background to the meditations.   |
|  AURA<br><a href="http://www.aurahealth">www.aurahealth</a>  | Free for most of the app but have to pay to unlock full app £11.99 a month        | This app contains mindfulness meditations, stories, life coaching, and so much more. With thousands of empowering and resonating audio tracks, Aura has just what you need every day, and constantly learns what works for you.   |

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| <br><b>Breethe</b><br><a href="http://www.breethe.com">www.breethe.com</a>   | <p>Free basic account. Premium Plan- free 14 day trial. £12 per month.</p> | <p>This app includes guided meditations for real life situations, music for every mood, personalised recommendations and a learn to meditate programme.</p>  |
| <br><b>Portal</b><br><a href="https://apps.apple.com/us/app/portal-focus-sleep-escape/id1436994560">https://apps.apple.com/us/app/portal-focus-sleep-escape/id1436994560</a> | <p>£3.99 to download</p>   | <p>Instead of guided meditations, the app transports users around the world, helping them chill out with the assistance of some of nature's most relaxing sounds</p>   |
| <br><b>Simple Habit</b><br><a href="http://www.simplehabit.com">www.simplehabit.com</a>  | <p>Free to download, optional subscription £38.99/year, iOS/Android</p>    | <p>This app offers audio meditations as short as five minutes, with good quality guided meditations that really do help to reduce stress and calm the mind. Lots of the content is free to use, if you don't want to pay for the optional subscription.</p>  |
| <br><b>10% Happier</b><br><a href="http://www.tenpercent.com">www.tenpercent.com</a>   | <p>Free one week trial, then £12.99/month or £87.99/year, iOS/Android</p>  | <p>The 10% Happier app bills itself as "mediation for fidgety sceptics". The guided meditations are very much "no frills", you can also set reminders to ensure you never miss a session. Pay the subscription and you'll get more than 500 guided meditations.</p>  |
| <br><b>Buddhify</b><br><a href="http://buddhify.com">buddhify.com</a>  | <p>iOS/£2.99 to download, Android or £24 a year.</p>                       | <p>The central idea in buddhify is that you don't have to find time for meditation, instead it comes to you. That is why all our meditations are categorised by what you're doing or how you're feeling. So you'll find guided meditations for Walking, Stress &amp; Difficult Emotion, Work Break, Going to Sleep, Waking Up and many other different categories.</p> |

### Free Audio Resources for Mindfulness Meditation:

Mindful: <https://www.mindful.org/audio-resources-for-mindfulness-meditation/>

The Free Mindfulness Project: <http://www.freemindfulness.org/download>

Mindfulness Exercises: <https://mindfulnessexercises.com/free-guided-meditations-mindfulness-talks/>

The Mindfulness Network: <https://home.mindfulness-network.org/practice-mindfulness/audio-downloads/>

