

Health & Wellbeing



Life has been stressful over the past year and a half. We have seen changes to our lives that nobody could have foreseen and had to make some difficult decisions.

But what about you? Feeling positive and calm within ourselves is important for our mental health.

Take time for yourself

For most of us we feel guilty for spending time on ourselves. However, taking time for yourself is essential for your well-being and can help you to be more resilient in all areas of life.

Mindfulness

It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much. Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental well-being. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. You can take steps to develop it in your own life.

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. "It's easy to stop noticing the world around us. It's also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living 'in our heads' – caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour," he says. "An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment."

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

Ready, set, go!

Mindfulness exercises are ways of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing, and yoga. Training helps people to become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and body sensations so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, they are better able to manage them. Practising mindfulness can give more insight into emotions, boost attention and concentration and improve relationships.



How to be 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

Even as we go about our daily lives, we can notice the sensations of things, the food we eat, the air moving past the body as we walk. This is very small, but it has huge power to interrupt the 'autopilot' mode we often engage day to day, and to give us new perspectives on life.

Keep it regular

It can be helpful to pick a regular time – the morning journey to work or a walk at lunchtime – during which you decide to be aware of the sensations created by the world around you.

Try something new

Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat in meetings or going somewhere new for lunch, can also help you notice the world in a new way.

Watch your thoughts

Some people find it very difficult to practice mindfulness. As soon as we stop what we're doing, lots of thoughts and worries crowd in. It might be useful to remember that mindfulness isn't about making these thoughts go away, but rather about seeing them as mental events. It is like standing at a bus station and seeing 'thought buses' coming and going without having to get on them and be taken away. This can be very hard at first, but with gentle persistence it is possible.

Name thoughts and feelings

To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them.

www.2aspire.org.uk

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Useful Resources to help us TO BE MINDFUL



Here are a few links and resources that will help adults to become more mindful and practice mindfulness to help with well-being, reducing stress and coping with the roller-coaster of life:

As well as practising mindfulness in daily life, it can be helpful to set aside time for a more formal mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness meditation involves sitting silently and paying attention to thoughts, sounds, the sensations of breathing or parts of the body, bringing your attention back whenever the mind starts to wander. Yoga and tai-chi can also help with developing awareness of your breathing.

Simple Mindful Breathing Exercise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFDTP2GogaQ&app=desktop>

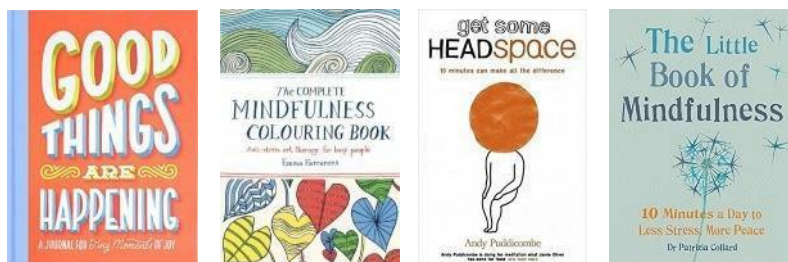
Online resources:

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/searchapps/?query=mindfulness>

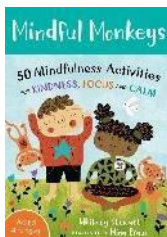
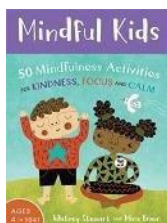
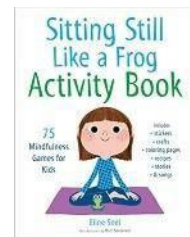
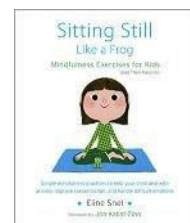
<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/free-mindfulness-worksheets/>

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>



Some super links and resources that will help your children to become more mindful and practice mindfulness to help with well-being, build resilience and cope with life's wobbles:



<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>

<https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/mindfulness-activities-kids/>

<https://parentswithconfidence.com/25-mindfulness-practices-for-kids-who-cant-sit-still/>

“The mind is like a muscle - the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets and the more it can expand.”
Idowu Koyenikan