



Mindfulness doesn't have to be complicated. It doesn't have to include funny smells, expensive rocks and obtuse angles of your limbs. In fact, it's just the opposite. Mindfulness is meant to break things down to the most basic elements within our lives and that starts with **"being present"**.

Be present in your life. Be present in the moment you are in. Observe, acknowledge and understand that moment, but don't let your mind wander to what's still to come, what has already passed or what may never come to be.

If talk has gained your interest in learning more about mindfulness, then there is plenty of information out there that could assist you. Podcasts, utube, apps, books, audio books, apps for mindfulness colouring .... If you don't know where to start, then below you will find the most basic depiction of "being present". Take a look and think about who is mindful and who is mind-full... Mindfulness is something that can be developed with some reflective practice. This means reflecting on what you experience, rather than just experiencing it.

Allowing ourselves to notice what is going on in our thinking, attention and feelings is a great place to start. The more we practice asking ourselves "what do I notice now?" helps us to build up the skills and 'habit' of being mindful. Where can you start?

**Try these exercises:**

- ✦ Wherever you are, start by noticing what you see, what you feel, what you hear.
- ✦ The other day when I arrived at work, instead of rushing out of my car, I sat for a moment with the car turned off and simply listened. I was amazed at how energising it was to not rush! Taking the time to engage with my surroundings I heard the sounds of planes; cars; birds; people talking as they walked past my car; radio music from other cars; rustling of leaves in beautiful Adelaide in Autumn! The start of my day commenced with a different focus, I was giving myself permission to use my sensory abilities that I may not have realised I had before I became mindful!
- ✦ Notice if you are using 'perception' labels or if you are describing them in a sensory way.
- ✦ Sit in a quiet space. Tune into what you think, your inner dialogue and inner feelings. Allow yourself to be slightly removed from them – so that you can notice them, but not get drawn into them. Keep asking yourself "what am I noticing now"? Sit quietly. Notice your thoughts and feelings. Notice the space between them. What do you notice?
- ✦ Here are some tips to be more mindful in a normal day:
- ✦ Set up your schedule so that you can have focus. Don't allow your email to intrude or alert you while you are working on other things. Reduce distractions that may draw your attention, but if you are distracted, allow yourself to notice them and to make a conscious choice about if you attend to them or not.

- ✦ Set up your schedule so you are clear what it is that you want to achieve, and what requires your focus (a great idea is to develop an Urgency x Importance matrix to prioritise tasks\*\*). Block time to focus on each task. Notice what tries to distract you. Allow yourself to let that go and keep a focus on you.
- ✦ When you meet with someone, be mindful of your thoughts and judgements. Are you perceiving or sensing the conversation? Are you 100% present to this conversation? Notice your thoughts and feelings. Notice your judgements. Notice if you are present or distracted?

In the end, give yourself permission to not be 'perfectly mindful'. Everyone will be distracted. Everyone will make judgements. The aim is to notice and to self-correct to the state of being mindful, present and focused when you do. The benefits will come in terms of your capacity to be efficient, effective and more flexible in how you think, allowing you to achieve a higher quality of lived experience.

## Some benefits of mindfulness – improve focus and productivity

### Greater Focus

One of our biggest challenges to getting things done is the distraction of the mind. While we try to get one job done, our mind reminds us of 10 others that still need doing. We quickly check our email because our mind alerts us to the fact that there may be unread emails in our inbox and if they remain unchecked we may be missing out on fake news or similar junk mail!

Mindfulness jumps in the way of all these distractions of the mind and says "Hey, come back to the present moment, get what needs to be done, done!"

### Effective Planning

On the outset, mindfulness may appear to conflict with the concept of planning. But in fact, they complement each other greatly. Planning allows us to practice mindfulness by reducing the burdens that the mind needs to worry about. If we schedule and plan all our responsibilities and duties, we have less to distract us from our daily tasks.

### Reducing Stressors in our lives

Stress is brought about by imagining negative future scenarios. If we were to live completely in the present, we would not suffer from this stress. But the human brain has the ability to cast itself into the future, so for now we are stuck with this capability and will have to learn how to manage it.

Stressing about future scenarios that haven't happened is a pointless habit; mindfulness can teach us how to redirect our negative and worrying thoughts back to the present moment and remind us that the future hasn't happened and so far is not controlling our present circumstances.

"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy." So take this moment to remember that the future hasn't happened, the past is gone and the wonderful present, is all we have and all that is guaranteed. Make sure you are part of each moment that you live and experience the gift that is "the Now".

	URGENT	Not urgent
IMPORTANT	Urgent and important	Important but not urgent
Not important	Urgent but not important	Not urgent and not important

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