

# Mindfulness

Mindfulness is talked about so much that it seems a lot more complicated than it actually is. What mindfulness is actually: **being fully aware of the present moment**. That's it!

## **Mindful vs. Full Mind**

Most of us live in a constant state of overwhelm without even noticing it. We are consumed with our endless to-do lists, keeping track of our families and friends, planning out meals and activities, and so much more. Having a full mind makes us go into autopilot, doing the routine tasks in our day mindlessly. Being mindful is the opposite of mindless. It's taking a break from the noise and focusing on the present moment for as long as you can. Mindfulness is not a destination, it's a practice. It's not practical to be only concerned with the present, life is a lot more complicated than that. With enough practice though, *we can notice when we are feeling overwhelmed and step back to take a breath and ground ourselves before returning to the task at hand.*

## **Different Types of Mindfulness**

### **Meditation**

Mindful meditation is probably the most popular and well-known example of mindfulness. This can be done seated or reclined (though if you lie down completely, you may fall asleep). The simplest way to meditate is by bringing your attention to your breath, inhaling for a count of five, holding for a count of five, exhaling for a count of ten, and holding for a count of five. Your mind will naturally drift away from your breath, acknowledge any thoughts that appear and let them flow away as you gently guide your attention back to your breath. You can also find guided meditations on YouTube to turn on and listen to if breath work doesn't work for you. Aim for 5 minute meditations, but don't be afraid to go longer when you have the time and ability.

### **Observation**

Pick an object to focus on. Crystals work well for this, but don't break the bank. You can also find tumbled stones on the lake shore, pinecones, or small branches. Spend a couple minutes simply turning the object around in your hand, noticing as much as you can about how it feels and looks. You can also sit outside or go for a walk and pay attention to everything you see, hear, and feel along the way.

### **Immersion**

Throw yourself wholly into the task at hand. Whether you're cooking or cleaning, pay attention to every single part of the task. Play around and experiment with new ways of accomplishing your goal. Cooking is especially good for this type of mindfulness, as you can use your senses to adapt an old recipe or try something completely out of your comfort zone.

### **Appreciation**

Take five to ten minutes at the end of your day to write down a few things that made you smile. What moments filled you up? What made the good parts of your day possible? Who did you enjoy being with? Some people may resonate more with gratitude lists, but appreciation is accessible for everyone. Regardless, focusing on the things that lift you up is a wonderful way to enjoy the present moment.