

Look for ways to support your mindfulness practice.

- Learning to meditate in a group setting may be easier for some people. Look for classes in your community that teach mindfulness meditation or mindful-based stress management techniques.
- Try a mindfulness app. There are many mindfulness apps available online. Apps can remind you to take a break, guide meditations and provide further inspiration to practice mindfulness.



**Practicing mindfulness
on a regular basis
is like any exercise.
The more often
you practice, the better
you become.**

We all think about the past or worry about the future. But spending too much time dwelling on those thoughts can cause anxiety and stress – which can negatively affect your health. Mindfulness practice helps you focus on the present, lower stress and anxiety, and improve health!

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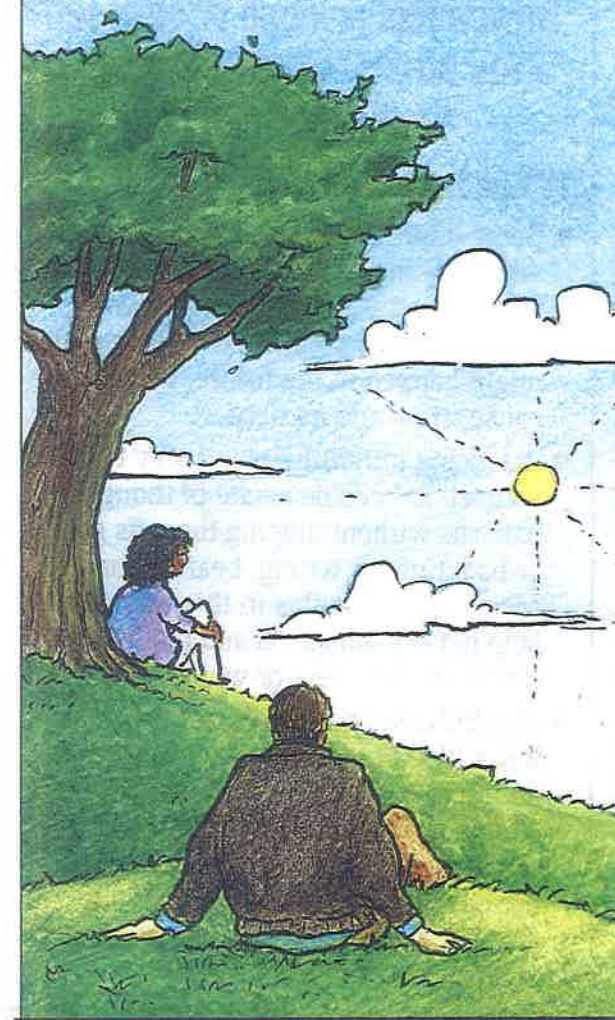
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Mindfulness

Tips for Reducing Stress and Anxiety





Do you feel anxious or stressed? You are not alone. Practicing mindfulness can help.

What is mindfulness?

- Being mindful means paying attention to what is going on in the present moment. When you are mindful you are not dwelling on thoughts of the past or what might happen in the future, which can cause stress and anxiety.
- Practicing mindfulness is a way to train yourself to become aware of thought patterns without judging them as good or bad, right or wrong. Learning to accept your thoughts in this way can help put the brakes on automatic reactions like stress or worry.
- Mindfulness can lead to less depression, lower blood pressure, better sleep and an improved sense of well-being. In fact, studies show that people who practice mindful meditation, even for short periods, have an improved ability to focus, make decisions, manage emotions and react to stress.

Here are ways you can practice mindfulness in your everyday life.

Pay attention to the present moment.

- Take purposeful breaks throughout the day and simply focus on what is happening in the present moment.
- Notice the breeze, the color of the sky, the sensations in your body, or your thoughts and feelings.
- This can be done any place and at any time. Try it while you are standing in line, walking down the street or sitting at a desk.



Do a mental scan of your body.

- Take a moment during the day to do a quick mental scan of how your body feels.
- Start at your toes, and notice each sensation in your body as you work your way to the top of your head.
- Notice places in your body that might feel tense or tight.

Focus on your breathing.

- When you feel stress or anxiety, focus just on your breathing for a minute.
- Close your eyes and breathe in deeply to the count of four. Exhale as you count to eight. A long exhale signals your body to relax.
- You might try this technique when you are at the dentist, or before a test or a meeting.



Use micro moments to break from stress.

- Feeling stressed or worried? Stop and focus on small everyday tasks, such as brushing your teeth or drinking a warm beverage. Slow down and pay attention to each action and sensation involved in the task.



Observe and name your thoughts.

- Imagine for a moment that you are watching your thoughts from a distance. Notice and name them. For instance, are you worrying about paying your bills? Stop and name the thought: "That is worrying."
- Labeling your thoughts puts a brake on the thought for just a moment and helps to interrupt feelings of stress or anxiety that may arise due to the thought.

Practice meditation.

- Find a quiet place to sit comfortably. You can close your eyes or keep them open. Focus your attention on your breath as you inhale and exhale.
- Allow your thoughts to cross your mind. Notice them, but let them go and gently bring your focus back to your breath.
- Try this twice a day for about three minutes each time. Build up to longer periods of meditation.

