

## Mindfulness in 7 Steps: An Easy Guide to Practice Mindfulness



If you're wondering how to start mindfulness meditation in your daily life, then you're at the right place. Our **7 Mindfulness Steps** is a quick and easy guide to learn and start your own mindfulness practice within the shortest time. It's smart and effective, and yet brief and simple.

Once you master this into a habit, you could start mini-workshops to teach **Mindfulness in 7 Steps** technique to others. By the way any new habit takes 66 days to build, like a [daily exercise habit](#).

*Meditation is a mental training to improve the ability to focus your attention, and control your emotions.* There are many ways to meditate. Mindfulness meditation is one of them.

Throughout the existence of humans, since thousands of years, people have used mindfulness techniques to build awareness into the present moment with calm acceptance — to [deal with the stresses](#) of life. The Buddhist teachers methodically codified it as a practice of meditation.

*One thing, all mindfulness is not meditation. Also, all meditation is not mindfulness.*

And you don't always have to meditate to practice mindfulness. You can also practice mindfulness without meditating — as mindful eating, walking, and listening.

## Mindfulness and Being Mindful

**At its simplest, when thoughts and emotions arrive in your mind, but you let them pass without getting carried away, you're in mindfulness.**



It means you are paying attention to, and conscious of, what's happening around you and inside you. Being mindful is being into a state of [focused awareness](#) of the present moment, dragging your mind away from the future and the past.

But we absolutely must add a little more to that definition: While you're curiously aware of your passing thoughts, you must make sure you also examine them *without any judgment*.

**• Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment with an attitude of openness, curiosity, non-judgment, and acceptance.**

Jon Kabat-Zinn, author the bestseller Full Catastrophe Living, the most famous Western researcher on mindfulness meditation, and the founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, explains it in following words:

**• Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.**

## Mind-Wandering: Edginess in The Modern Day

Have you ever realized that attempting to stay peaceful and relaxed *just before* an extremely challenging event has a typically opposite effect — it uploads an additional bulk of agitation into you?

Did it happen to you that trying to get rid of your irksome habit often appears so hard — *like an unhappy habit of procrastination* — that you almost mark it as impossible?

*Does it get to you that a deeply satisfying state of happiness, a state of all-around wellbeing and true joy, often remains elusive, despite living a fortunate life?*

These, and other such difficult situations we often find ourselves in today's world, have been traced to a change that happened in the brains of our earliest ancestors — which they passed down to us. It was a tendency of the humans to go after pleasure, and block out pain, that got biologically hardwired into the brain. *We call this the Pain-Pleasure principle.*

Evolutionary science hints this automatic behavior pattern got hardwired into our earliest predecessors as a survival mechanism. (By the way, we have a **neuroplastic brain**, which means our brain can literally reshape itself.)

If they didn't run from pain, they wouldn't have survived. And to run from possible pain, they were always looking out for dangers. That jungle-living ancestor's mind was always on this mode:

*What's wrong here that can cause me pain?*

Ever since then, we are on a constant watch looking out for what could go wrong around us, even in the modern day. It is this that lies as the foundation of the many of our psychological issues we routinely face in the modern world.

It's this **hypervigilance**, and our harmful **habit of self-criticism**, we need to tone down first for thriving in today's chaotic world.

## Benefits of Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness will help you take away that edginess from your mind. A regular practice of mindfulness meditation *reduces stress, anger outbursts, and overthinking (if you overthink, here's how to stop it)*.

*It also increases self-awareness, fulfillment and happiness.* Among other benefits, studies have demonstrated decidedly that people who practice mindfulness have:

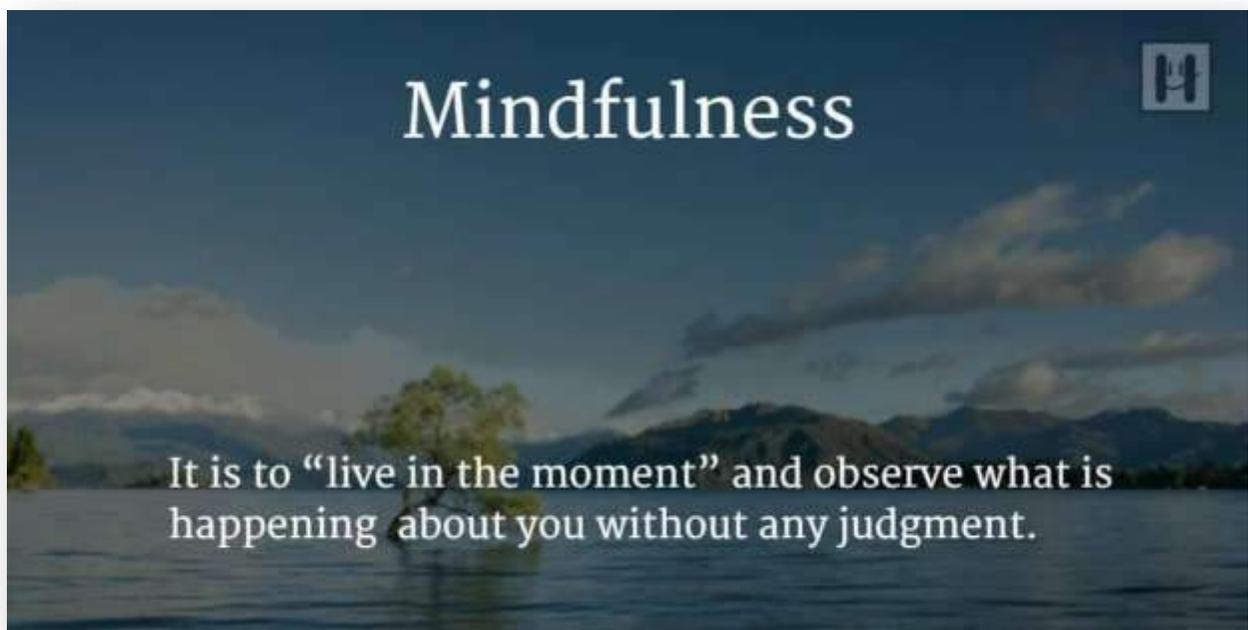
- improved their health and overall quality of life,
- [reduced their depression](#) and anxiety,
- increased their concentration, and
- achieved stronger ability to cope more effectively with day-to-day stresses.

*There are scientific proofs to its effects.* No less than 21 brain scan studies over the ten years have revealed that long years of mindfulness practice [restructures parts of our brain](#) — especially these three:

1. medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC)
2. right anterior insula (RAI)
3. anterior cingulate cortex (ACC)

Studies also showed while long-term stress shrinks our **hippocampus** (memory center of brain), mindfulness training increases grey-matter density in the same area.

Come to think of it, the [positive mindset](#) changes mindfulness practice brings about are happening right at our brain level, which is remarkable.



## How To Practice Mindfulness In 7 Steps

### **Preparation:**

- First, find a comfortable place where you can focus and will not be disturbed or interrupted.
- Decide how long you're going to dedicate. Set a timer. *You can meditate as short or as long as you like.*
- Start with shorter periods, around 5-10 minutes. Tip: *10 min of 24-hours is just 0.7% of your day.*
- Now, place yourself in a posture that is *both relaxed and alert*, with your back reasonably straight.

### **7 Mindfulness Steps:**

#### **Step 1.**

*Take a deep breath and relax, with your eyes open or closed. Be aware of sounds around you coming and going, and let them be whatever they are. Keep taking and releasing slow, deep breaths.*

#### **Step 2.**

Close your eyes and drop all your concerns now, like setting down a heavy bag. After the meditation, you can pick those up again — if you want to. Realize that you are allowing yourself this time to move away from worldly worries.

#### **Step 3.**

*Now focus on your breath. Bring your whole awareness to the sensation of your breathing.*

Sense the cool air coming in and the warm air going out. Feel the chest rising and falling, the belly expanding and contracting. Don't try to control your breath; let it be whatever it is, flowing in and out of its own.

#### **Step 4.**

*Start counting your breaths softly — count from one to ten, and then start over. Start back from one if you notice you missed the sequence before reaching number ten, because your mind had wandered.*

It's normal for the mind to wander. And when it does, just return to counting the breaths again from the start. Be gentle on yourself, letting go of all [self-criticism](#).

#### **Step 5.**

*Get more and more absorbed in your breathing. Start to notice the volume, speed, warmth and sound of the breath traveling in and out of your nostrils.*

Once your mind settles down during the first few minutes, you will find it easier to focus your attention on the air as it travels deeper, in through the wind-pipe and into your lungs, and back out again. Open your whole consciousness to the simple process of breathing.

### **Step 6.**

*Now, bring your attention to the presence of the thoughts that are moving through your mind, trying to pull your attention away from your breath. Take notice of them. This is the **most important** step.*

Let yourself be aware of those thoughts and feelings, wishes and plans, images and memories. Your streams of thoughts will keep alluring your mind away from your breath. Tell yourself: I'm noticing my thoughts, yet I'm not getting carried away by them.

As Russ Harris says, "First, mindfulness is a process of awareness, not thinking."

Don't get caught up or fascinated in them to start thinking yourself away. But also, don't struggle with them. *The idea is to sit with your thoughts and let them be whatever they are.* Most of all, just notice their impermanence as they finally fade off. And yet have an attitude of acceptance toward those free-flowing thoughts. Each time you catch yourself being dragged away by a thought, gently bring back your focus to your breath — *again and again.*

### **Step 7.**

*Feel a growing sense of peacefulness within as you keep settling into the breath with more focus.*

Notice how it feels to get caught up in the passing contents of awareness—and how it feels to let them go by. Be aware of peaceful awareness itself. Once you're there in the state of *peaceful awareness*, you may decide to sit in that state for as long as you want. Finally, you may bring the meditation to an end by opening your eyes, stretching out your hands and getting up.

## **Summary**

In brief, find a comfortable place where you can focus and will not be interrupted, and follow these steps.

- **Step 1:** Take a deep breath and relax.
- **Step 2:** Close your eyes and drop all your concerns.
- **Step 3:** Bring your whole awareness to your breathing.
- **Step 4:** Start counting your breaths.
- **Step 5:** Get deeply immersed in your breathing process.
- **Step 6:** Bring your attention to the thoughts moving through your mind.
- **Step 7:** Let those mind-wandering thoughts fly away like clouds and keep settling into the breath with more focus.

## Final Words

Now you've learnt these seven simple steps, it's time to invite mindfulness into your daily life. You'll do yourself a world of good with just 10 minutes out of your 24-hours.

Mindfulness boosts your happiness levels, betters your social relationships, and even builds your immunity. Mindfulness practice decreases your anxiety, stress and pain-perception. It makes you [more compassionate](#) and attentive. Some say it will also increase your lifespan.

*One little advice:* keep your phone, especially social media, on silent mode while you practice mindfulness. We suggest you keep away from social media as much as you can throughout your day, as according to a research [your Facebook friends can make you unhappy](#).

• **Mindfulness says: When you accept, you transform.**

*So, start the practice today.* Prepare yourself and setup a place to **teach others in your community** the same easy and effective method, for example, by holding mini-workshops.

[Check out our [resource page on mindfulness](#). If you're looking for some great *offbeat books* on mindfulness, [find them here](#).]

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