

# Mindfulness

---

---

**BEING PRESENT IS THE KEY  
To Your Wellbeing**



**35 Uses And Benefits Of The Mindfulness Practice  
For Your Mind, Emotional Health And General Wellbeing**

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....5

What Is Mindfulness? .....6

Origins Of Mindfulness.....7

Daily Mindfulness Practice .....8

Mindful Meditation.....9

35 Uses And Benefits Of Mindfulness .....11

Final Thoughts.....22

Disclaimer: This publication is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Medical advice should always be obtained from a qualified medical professional for any health conditions or symptoms associated with them. Every possible effort has been made in preparing and researching this material. We make no warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability of its contents or any omissions.

In this ebook, you will find a few samples of science along with some of my own anecdotal experience as a clinician in private practice for over two decades. I have been exposed to many mental and physical disorders from a plethora of people, places and much evidence. Based research. I am most impressed by some of the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, who is a leader in this field. His book called, Full Catastrophe Living (Delacorte Press, 1990) is of huge benefit to anyone interested in a comprehensive read on this topic. I begin with a few words he gives as his personal definition and comments included below...

## Jon Kabat-Zinn: Defining Mindfulness: What is mindfulness?

The founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction explains.

### **The Definition of Mindfulness:**

Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally," says Kabat-Zinn. "And then I sometimes add, in the service of self-understanding and wisdom."

"We all take ourselves too seriously because we believe that there's someone to take seriously. That "me." We become the star of our own movie. The story of "me", starring, of course, me! And everyone else becomes a bit player in our movie. And then we forget that it's a fabrication. It's a construction. And that it's not a movie and that there's no "you" that you can actually find if you were to peel back.

Are you your name? Are you your age? Are you your thoughts? Are you your opinions? Are you your genetic inheritance?

Even your genes, if you meditate, or eat differently, they're going to be expressed by the hundreds differently. So, you're not even your genetic inheritance. So, who are you?

*How much of our time we are running the narrative of "I" "Me" and "Mine" which is now being identified with certain regions of the brain that do that narrative default mode kind of thing.*

And here's where the rubber really meets the road: The *question* is much more important than the dime store answers that we come up with.

So, then we can notice this phenomenon called "selfing." How much of our time we are running the narrative of "I" "Me" and "Mine" which is now being identified with certain regions of the brain that do that narrative default mode kind of thing. And then mindfulness MBSR has been shown to light up other areas, more lateral areas, where there's no more story of "me."

It's just this breath. That out-breath. And it's not me breathing, either. If it was up to me to be breathing, I would have died a long time ago. Oops! Got distracted. Forgot. Dead."

## Introduction

Mindfulness has been gaining in popularity recently and it is leaving many people wondering what it is and how it can be used to benefit our day-to-day lives.

Many people are confused by how to practice mindfulness and others think they are being mindful when in fact they have misunderstood what it means to be mindful.

Let's learn what mindfulness really is, where it came from, and thirty-five uses and benefits that mindfulness can bring into your life.



## What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means to focus on the present moment with intention and accept it without judgment. This allows the mind to be still and focus on NOW.

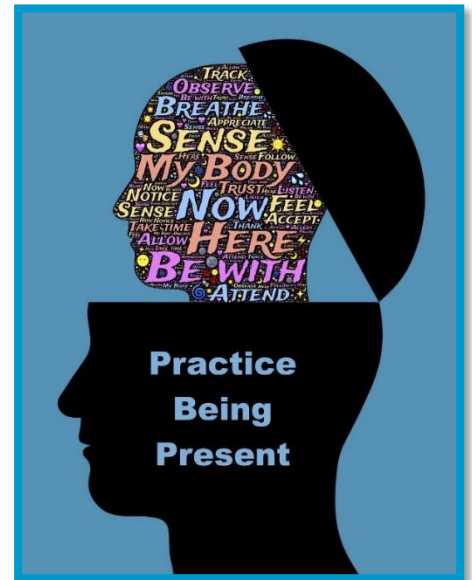
Being mindful means that you are able to maintain a moment-by-moment awareness of your feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations, as well as what is going on in your surrounding environment.

It means that you aren't so focused on the past or the future that you are missing what is happening right now. You stay On Point!

Being mindful also means that you are accepting of your thoughts and feelings without judging them or believing that they are right or wrong. This allows your mind to choose from its core and

center on what it knows and resonates as truth. Everyone has this inner sense of self-awareness but it is often covered over by the noise and opinions of the outer world (mental chatter). We are all filled with truth that is above the lower (dense, brain fog) areas. It is called Intuition and it is tuition FREE. It carries the truth that sets you free to know your own mind.

In simple terms, it means that you are aware of everything going on around you and how it makes you feel. Feelings are the secret to healing all the lies and attachments to past beliefs.





## Origins Of Mindfulness

Mindfulness has become increasingly popular in Western societies, although it originated in Buddhist philosophy more than two and a half thousand years ago.

Just because mindfulness has its roots in the Buddhist religion, that doesn't mean that you need to believe or practice the Buddhist faith to gain anything from using mindfulness.

In fact, mindfulness can be practiced by anyone of any faith or religion. It involves training the mind and does not enforce any religious beliefs. Mindfulness training helps you to better know your TRUE mind so you can access what you really do believe. The truth of your own beliefs is an inherent knowing that is embedded in everyone but cannot be easily accessed with the filters of knowledge and false teachings that the programs (and, even religions) teach through many different systems.

Training your own mind to know its true power and authority to self-awareness is the key to rising above the double mind that we are trained to use (self-judgment). The one mind that is whole and complete begins to settle and not be anxious over the conditioning programs of right vs. wrong. No one in the outer world can judge what is right for you.

## Daily Mindfulness Practice

You can practice being mindful in your everyday life, by **simply** staying the present moment and not focusing on the past or worrying about the future.

Mindfulness can be applied to many everyday situations. For example, mindful eating means paying attention to each bite, instead of mindlessly wolfing down your food while watching a television show. Being present this way means being without judgment and enjoying the food without guilt.

Another example of being mindful in your day-to-day life is staying in the moment of what you are doing. Instead of worrying, you set an intention to stay focused on the task at hand. You are aware there will be things ahead of you that may challenge you, but you remain Present with the Presence in you that calms anxiety.

Remaining mindful in your daily life takes practice, as most people are so used to living in the past or the future that they let the present moment slip away unnoticed and un-enjoyed. This is the wiring of most humans. It has often been necessary to be hypervigilant to protect oneself against danger to survive. That is still necessary, but we know when we are present, we can hear guidance and our inner knowing is always available in the exact way it is needed. While we may not have control over what happens we do have control over how well we are prepared to respond to it.

Mindfulness promotes calmness to provide clarity and focus to take the action needed.





## Mindful Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a specific practice that helps hone the skill of being mindful and it is unique in that it is not trying to change who we are, but instead it is helping us to become aware of what is already true and happening moment by moment.

There are many different basic techniques to practicing mindful meditation; however, the most popular is the sitting mindful meditation. The steps to do this are as follows.

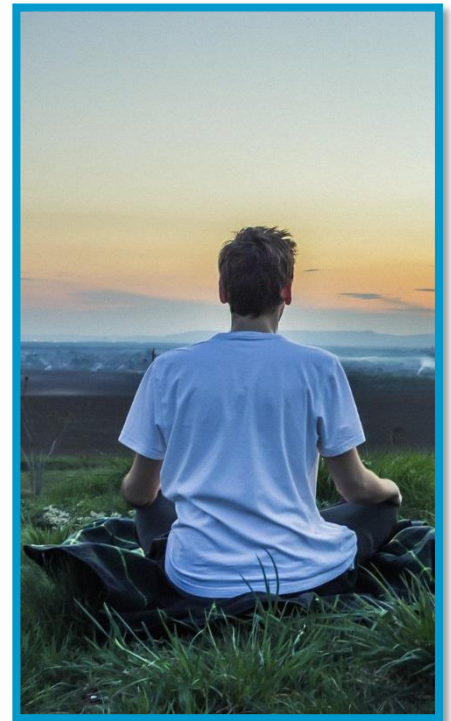
1. First, you want to set up your environment. Since it is unlikely you are going to have a room in your house that you are going to be able to devote just to being mindful, or meditating, you are going to want to choose a corner of a room or a spot in the home where it is quiet and free of distractions.
2. Once you have chosen your spot, you are going to need to choose your seat. You can be seated on the floor, a chair, or a cushion, whatever is going to be most comfortable for you. The point is to have a seat that is comfortable and stable. However, you don't want to be lying down when you are practicing being mindful as this is likely to make you fall asleep and therefore defeat the purpose of this practice.
3. Once you have chosen a seat, you are going to want to sit in a posture that is upright, but not rigid. The back should be straight with a natural curve in your lower back. Rest your hands on your thighs, facing down, and let your gaze rest about four to six feet in front of you. You aren't going to be staring



hard at what is in front of you, rather, just looking at what is there. If there is not enough space to look ahead four to six feet, just let your gaze fall wherever is most natural.

**You are going to begin by just sitting this way for a few minutes.**

4. If your mind wanders, just gently bring it back to your body and the environment. Don't be too hard on yourself if you find yourself constantly bringing your mind back, you want to let the thoughts happen, but not take over.
5. After a few minutes, you are going to begin to notice your breath. Don't try to control or count it, just notice how your body is while you are breathing in and out.
6. Finally, you are going to allow your thoughts to happen. You may notice that you become so caught up in your thoughts that you forget you are in the room. This is normal. Just gently bring yourself back to the room.



**Do this for ten minutes to start and work yourself up to about thirty minutes a day or several times per week.** Remember, mindfulness meditation is about being mindful of whatever is happening. It is not about controlling our thoughts or making ourselves stop thinking. It is about practicing a new habit and way of being.

***Focus on the here and the now, the present moment.***



#### 4. Less Emotional Reactivity

A study done in 2007 (Ortner et al), supported the notion that mindfulness meditation decreased the emotional reactivity of individuals. In a study of subjects who ranged from beginners of this practice to masters with more than twenty years of mindfulness meditation practice, it was found that the mindfulness meditation helped people to disengage from emotionally upsetting images.

The people who practiced mindfulness were better able to focus on a cognitive task when they see these pictures than those who did not practice mindfulness.

#### 5. Higher Relationship Satisfaction

Empirical evidence has shown that mindfulness protects against the emotionally stressful effects of a relationship conflict.

Studies have also shown that mindfulness is positively associated with the ability to express oneself and also predict the satisfaction a partner will have in a relationship.



#### 6. More Cognitive Flexibility

Some research has shown that mindfulness meditation is also able to give people greater cognitive flexibility. People who practice mindfulness are more skilled at practicing self-observation; this allows these people to recover faster when they are being negatively provoked. It also further restoration of self-control in all areas. It empowers the true self to be aware of the present and not flip into a traumatic reaction leftover from a past memory when the feelings were similar, or evoked fear. The growth and development of autonomy and not having the outer world 'push buttons' or trigger to out of the present gives a sense of empowerment. This will lead to inner stability and the ability to choose balance and harmony with life.

## 7. Decreased Anxiety

A study published in JAMA Internal Medicine done by researchers at John Hopkins, showed that there was moderate evidence that mindfulness meditation could alleviate anxiety to a similar degree as drug therapy does. Current research (Dr. Lisa Miller, *The Awakened Brain*) has some amazing new scientific proof to show the power to heal many forms of anxiety.

## 8. Higher Quality Of Life

Using both qualitative and quantitative measures, a study done in 2002 by Bruce, Young, Turner, Vander Wal, and Linden, found that nursing students reported a higher quality of life when they were practicing mindfulness meditation. This has also been proved in numerous other studies in 2007, 2008, and 2009.



## 9. Enhanced Self-Acceptance

Studies have shown that practicing mindful meditation encourages positive thinking and positive emotions through compassion and promotes the development of self-acceptance as well as feelings of competence about one's life.

## 10. Increased Optimism

When you are practicing mindfulness, you are more open to accepting things just as they are. Mindfulness meditation encourages focusing on the now and not focusing on the future or the past. Living in the Practice of presence elevates the need to project past trauma onto the future.

By not worrying about what is going to happen in the future or spending time looking back at the past, people are able to cultivate a higher level of optimism and positive emotions in their lives.







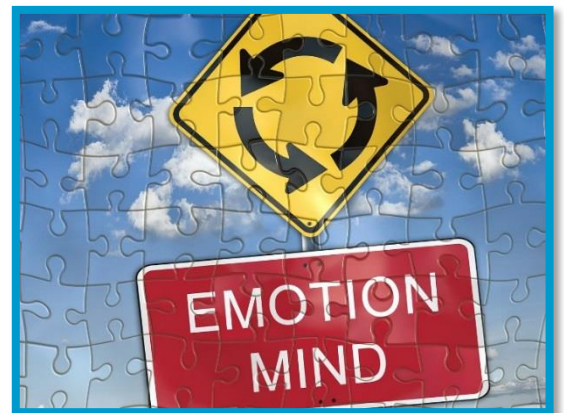
about a 40% reduction in pain intensity while morphine typically reduces pain intensity by just 25%.

### **17. Assists In Managing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

In a study published in the Clinical Neurophysiology Journal, fifty adult ADHA patients were submitted to Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy. These patients demonstrated reduced hyperactivity and impulsivity, and increased skills in acting with awareness. This contributed to an overall improvement in their inattention symptoms.

### **18. Increased Ability To Ignore Distractions**

Emory University in Atlanta conducted a study that demonstrated that participants with more mindfulness experience exhibited an increase in the connectivity within the brain networks that were responsible for controlling attention.



### **19. Improved Rapid Memory Recall**

A group at Harvard Medical School studied the effect of mindfulness meditation on retaining information. The group had no previous experience with mindfulness or meditation. Over an eight-week period, the group showed a marked change in their daily brain function.

They discovered that those who mediate could exert better control over their alpha rhythm, which is a brain wave that is believed to screen out distractions, which makes it easier to process information.

## **20. Effectively Allocates Limited Brain Resources**

If the brain is given two targets to pay attention to, in consecutive order with a half of a second difference in time shown between the two, the second target is often not seen. This is referred to as an attention blink.

The University of California conducted an experiment where a stream of random letters across a computer was shown to subjects in rapid succession. In between the letters, blank screens were also shown. Immediately after the stream ended, subjects were asked to type the letters they had seen as well as whether or not they saw a blank screen, and the results were fascinating.

Subjects with three months of intense meditation training were found to have a better control over the distribution of attention. They showed less allocation of brain resources for each letter shown and showed a reduction in their attention blink size.

## **21. Fosters Creativity**

Research that was conducted by the Leiden University in the Netherlands, demonstrated that the practice of mindful meditation had positive effects in both creativity as well as divergent thinking. Participants who followed the practice performed better when they were given a task to creatively come up with new ideas.

## **22. Reduced Risk Of Heart Disease**

Heart disease kills more people in the world than any other illness. In a study, which was published in 2012, divided a group of high-risk patients into two groups.

Half of the group took a class that taught diet, and exercise, while the other was taught mindful meditation. Through five years of follow, the group that had the meditation enjoyed a 48% reduction in their overall risks for stroke, heart attack, and even death.

### **23. Decreased Inflammatory Disorders**

It was noted during a study that mindfulness meditation reduced levels of pro-inflammatory genes. The study was done in France and Spain at the UW-Madison Waisman Centre and indicated that the practice of mindful meditation was able to produce a wide range of genetic and molecular effects on the participants.

When there is a faster physical recovery from a stressful situation, there was a correlation to the reduced levels of pro-inflammatory genes.

### **24. Helps Prevent Asthma, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Inflammatory Bowel Disease**

A study done by neuroscientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison concluded that mindfulness techniques were more effective in relieving the inflammatory symptoms of asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease than other activities that promote well-being.

In the study, two groups of people were exposed to different methods of stress control. One group received mindfulness training while the other received nutritional education, exercise, and music therapy.



### **25. Reduced Risk of Alzheimer's Disease**

Recent research that was published online in the journal Brain, Behavior and Immunity stated that thirty minutes of mindful meditation a day reduced the risk of Alzheimer's. The study was done by UCLA researchers who followed a group of forty men and women aged between fifty-five and eighty-five.

The participants were separated into two groups, one that was asked to participate in weekly two-hour mindfulness meetings, and one who didn't practice mindfulness. The results were that the group who participated in the mindfulness group was less likely to suffer from Alzheimer's because of substantially reduced expression of inflammation-related genes.

## **26. Managing Fibromyalgia**

In a study that was published in PubMed, eleven participants suffering from fibromyalgia underwent an eight-week mindfulness-training program. The study found that there were significant improvements in the number of reported "feel good" days and the number of days of "missed work" due to fibromyalgia.

The study also found an improvement in the overall health status of the participants and in their symptoms of stiffness, depression, and anxiety.

## **27. Increases Longevity**

While there is no conclusive research, data has suggested that mindfulness meditation may positively effect telomere length because it reduces cognitive stress and increases positive states of mind along with hormonal factors that lead to the promotion of telomere maintenance. Telomeres are a vital part of human cells that affect how our cells age.

## **28. Reduced Social Isolation**

In a study published in the American Psychological Association, it was found that there was an increase in social connection when subjects engaged in even just a few minutes of meditation. The results indicate that this is an easily implemented technique that may help to increase positive social emotions and decrease social isolation.

## **29. Increased Levels Of Compassion**

A study done by the Stanford School of Medicine found that a nine-week training program in mindfulness improved subject's abilities in the realm of compassion, including feeling compassion for self, for others and in receiving compassion from others.

### **30. Reduces Emotional Eating**

Mindful meditation helps with the reduction of stress and increases a person's level of awareness. The hormone cortisol is released as a response to stress. When cortisol is released, there is an increase in insulin resistance, which results in our bodies craving foods it doesn't need.

When mindful meditation is practiced, there is less stress, and when a person is less stressed or emotional, they are better able to confront their emotions without turning to food.

### **31. Reduced Symptoms Of Panic Disorder**

A study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry showed that mindfulness meditation reduced the effects of panic substantially.

The study submitted twenty-two patients to three months of mindfulness meditation. Afterward, twenty of those patients experienced reduced effects of their panic, which were maintained at follow-ups.

### **32. Improved Information Processing And Decision Making**

An assistant professor at UCLA, Eileen Luders, and her colleagues found that those who have been meditating for a long time had more gyrification of the brain than those who never mediated.

Gyrification is the folding of the cortex, which is believed to help the brain process information faster, as well as supporting decision making and attention skills.



### 33. Emotional Connections With Your Partner

Mindfulness meditation can influence your relationship in many ways. When you are mentally present, you are able to have a better flow of information between what the body is sensing to where it registers in the higher parts of your brain as awareness and understood as emotion.

This leads to both partners who practice being less defensive, improving communication and hearing skills and reducing the chances of reacting impulsively. It also leads to being more receptive to connecting with your partner in meaningful ways, both emotionally and physically.

### 34. Increased Maternal Bonding During Pregnancy

According to a University of Michigan Health System study, women with high-risk pregnancies who practiced mindfulness for ten weeks, enjoyed significant reductions in symptoms of depression and were also better able to bond with their infants, both while in the womb and after giving birth.



### 35. Decreased Need For Sleep

While this is still under further investigation, preliminary studies done by the University of Kentucky have shown that mindfulness meditation provides, at minimum, short-term performance improvement in even the most novice of meditators.

In long-term meditators who spend multiple hours in meditation, there is an association of significantly decreased sleeping time when compared to a control who did not meditate but match in age and gender.

This implies that meditation can replace a portion of sleep or even contribute to paying off sleep debt.

## Final Thoughts

Now that you have read the effects that mindfulness can have on your body, mind, and quality of life, it is clear to see that there are many benefits that come from practicing mindfulness, and mindful meditation.

In fact, some of the ways that being mindful can affect your life may even surprise you.

Practicing mindfulness will bring positive benefits to your emotional, mental, and physical well-being as well as how you interact socially.

While learning how to practice being mindful is going to take some time and effort on your part, you will find that it is more than worth it when you begin to notice the benefits it is bringing to your life as well as to those who are around you.

Everyone wants to be less stressed and happier in his or her lives, and being mindful is a great way to accomplish just that.

Keep in mind that being mindful is not the same as ignoring what is going on around you. It is not the same as clearing your mind of all thoughts; instead, you are going to be more focused on what is happening around you and more accepting of how you are reacting to those same things within the present moment.

**Stay mindful and take care!**

