

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a mental state defined as: *the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.* Developing mindfulness involves formal practices, such as sitting meditation, body scanning, and mindful movement, as well as informal mindfulness, where the practice is integrated into everyday activities such as commuting or doing dishes.



Tips to incorporate mindfulness

1. Start slowly.

Some of the challenges individuals commonly report with mindfulness practice include a lack of motivation and insufficient time. If you're new to mindfulness, you can start with meditating for one to three minutes per day, gradually building up from there. It may be helpful to incorporate mindfulness practices consistently at the same time each day to establish a regular routine.

2. Be patient with yourself.

Individuals new to mindfulness are often concerned about "not being able to do it" or unsure about whether they're "getting it right". Remind yourself that mindfulness practice shouldn't be focused on an outcome, but on the experience itself. According to John Kabat-Zinn, a pioneer in contemporary mindfulness research and practice, *"from the outset of practice, we are reminded that mindfulness is not about getting anywhere else or fixing anything. Rather, it is an invitation to allow oneself to be where one already is and to know the inner and outer landscape of the direct experience in each moment."*

3. Try different types of mindfulness practice.

Discovering the mindfulness practices best suited to your lifestyle and preferences can help you stay committed long-term. Fortunately, there are many different types of mindfulness and meditation practices. You may want to try a variety of activities, ranging from informal mindfulness during your daily commute to guided mindfulness meditation or physical yoga classes.

4. Use a mindfulness app.

A number of mobile mindfulness apps exist, helping you learn mindfulness techniques and stay accountable. Many apps are free, with optional in-app purchases for additional features.

This table summarizes the key features of several of the highest-rated mindfulness apps available.

App	Key features
Buddhify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 200 meditations ranging from three to 40 minutes in length • Mindfulness exercises that can be incorporated into daily activities (e.g., while traveling, at work, during meals) • Content for children
Calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness programs for beginner to advanced users • Guided meditation sessions from three to 25 minutes in length • "Sleep stories" intended to help transition the mind to sleep
Headspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hundreds of lessons based on themes such as stress, sleep, focus, and anxiety • Short guided meditations to fit busy schedules • "SOS exercises" for acute emotional or stressful times
Stop, Breathe, & Think	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment and personalized recommendations of guided meditations, yoga videos, and acupressure videos • Meditation content for teens and tweens • A variety of activity types and lengths for beginners to experienced meditators
The Mindfulness App	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A five-day guided introduction to mindfulness practice • Guided and silent meditations ranging from three to 30 minutes • Meditation reminders throughout the day and statistics to help track your progress

Health benefits of mindfulness

Research suggests that mindfulness practice may result in certain neurological changes, such as the growth of brain regions involved in memory consolidation, emotion regulation, and body awareness.

Mindfulness has shown to support health and wellness by:

- Improving symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Supporting long-term weight loss and improving obesity-related eating behaviors
- Reducing perceptions of pain and improving mobility in individuals with chronic pain
- Improving sleep time and quality in individuals with insomnia