



MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

For the last four months, readers have been learning about mindfulness as a tool for self-care. Now that you have the hang of it, we would like to provide you with a few brief practices to share with students. It's important that you feel comfortable with practicing mindfulness before sharing with students.

- ♥ 1. Begin and end each day with a mindfulness activity. This can be as simple as the whole class taking 3 deep breaths or listening to a chime (mindful listening). To help with transitions, try pairing mindfulness activities when the class returns from specials, lunch, or recess as mindfulness activities can help bring the energy level down when excitement is high.
- ♥ 2. Use mindful movement. You don't have to be a yoga teacher to incorporate mindful movement into the school day. Simple stretches timed with the students' breath can be helpful or you can use GoNoodle, an online resource with videos, which has a whole section on mindful movement.
- ♥ 3. Create a calm space in the classroom. A calm space is an area in the classroom where students can go when they are feeling upset or need to calm down. It is not a punishment and should be in a different place than a "time out" area. The area is usually a corner of the classroom, with pillows or a comfy chair, along with other calm down tools and reminders such a glitter jar, fidget items, and a small CD player with relaxing music and headphones. Post visual aids like a feelings poster or helpful breathing reminders. It is important to teach students how to use the area and to discuss rules. (Some teachers set a time limit of 5-10 minutes). For more information on using a calm space in your classroom ask you guidance counselor, district mental health counselor, or school social worker.

Helpful Links:

- <https://www.whatihavelearnedteaching.com/5-things-classroom-calming-area/>
- <https://selmadawani.com/create-calming-corner-classroom/>
- <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

Books:



Fun

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

for children

by Big Life Journal

1. "JUST ONE BREATH" BREATHING ACTIVITY

- Find a relaxing place, sit comfortably, and set a timer for one minute.
- Breathe deeply in and out while paying attention to any sensations you notice or sounds you hear.
- Take another slow deep breath, imagine the air moving down into the lungs and back up.
- Take one more deep breath and hold for a moment, then release it.



2. CREATE A GLITTER JAR

- Find a jar or plastic bottle and allow your child to decorate it however they like.
- Fill the bottle up 3/4 of the way with water. Next, add clear glue, food coloring, and glitter then shake.
- Seal the lid and you are ready to go.



3. HEARTBEAT EXERCISE

- Ask your child to stand up and either jump up and down or do jumping jacks for one minute.
- At the end of that minute, have them place their hand on their heart and pay attention to how their heartbeat and their breathing feels.



4. GOING ON A SAFARI

- Go outside on an exciting adventure, try picking up a small rock or touching a plant or flower.
- Notice the bugs or the birds. Take a moment to kneel down and touch the earth.
- Walk mindfully paying close attention to everything. Make sure you walk in silence because you want to notice all those little details.



5. TENSE AND RELEASE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly releasing.
- Next, squeeze the large muscles in the calves for 5 seconds, then gently release. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles for 5 seconds then gently release.
- Continue moving up the body for more relaxation.



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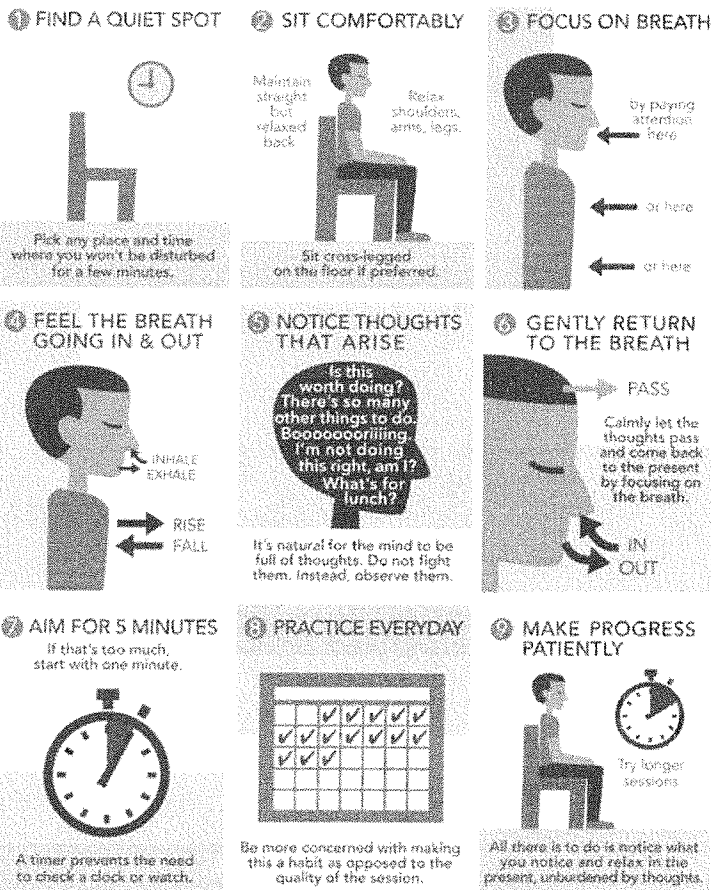
MINDFULNESS RECAP

The Definition of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmental, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.

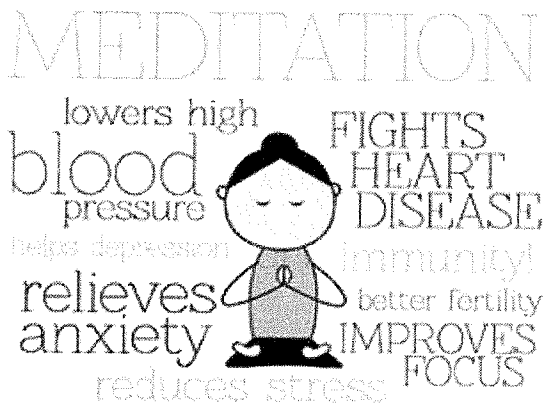
—Jon Kabat Zinn

How To Meditate



- FIND A QUIET SPOT**
Pick any place and time where you won't be disturbed for a few minutes.
- SIT COMFORTABLY**
Maintain straight but relaxed back. Sit cross-legged on the floor if preferred. Relax shoulders, arms, legs.
- FOCUS ON BREATH**
By paying attention here or here or here.
- FEEL THE BREATH GOING IN & OUT**
INHALE
EXHALE
RISE
FALL
- NOTICE THOUGHTS THAT ARISE**
Is this worth doing? There's so many other things to do. Booooooorrrrring! I'm not doing this right, am I? What's for lunch?
It's natural for the mind to be full of thoughts. Do not fight them. Instead, observe them.
- GENTLY RETURN TO THE BREATH**
PASS
Calmly let the thoughts pass and come back to the present by focusing on the breath.
IN
OUT
- AIM FOR 5 MINUTES**
If that's too much, start with one minute.
A timer prevents the need to check a clock or watch.
- PRACTICE EVERYDAY**
Be more concerned with making this a habit as opposed to the quality of the session.
- MAKE PROGRESS PATIENTLY**
Try longer sessions.
All there is to do is notice what you notice and relax in the present, unburdened by thoughts.

The Benefits of Mindfulness



MEDITATION

- lowers high blood pressure
- helps depression
- relieves anxiety
- reduces stress
- FIGHTS HEART DISEASE
- immunity!
- better fertility
- IMPROVES FOCUS

Source: [Total Wellness Club](#)

Source: [organicdailypost.com](#)

Mindfulness Posture

Chair—Feet flat on the floor about hip-distance-apart.

Cushion—Legs crossed.

Spine—Straight, but relaxed. Imagine a string is attached to the crown of the head & gently pulls the spine into alignment. Allow the shoulders & arms to relax.

Eyes—Open or slightly closed. If open, gaze slightly down & in front of you; this will help prevent distractions. Decide which you prefer & stick with it for the length of the **meditation**.

Hands—Palm-up on the knees, pressed together at heart center, or allow the right-hand to gently rest in the left as pictured above.

Tongue—Resting gently behind the top row of teeth to prevent swallowing. Allow it to remain relaxed & avoid pressing it with force.

Muscles—Relaxed. Taking a few deep breaths will help.

Mind—Focused, aware, non-judgmental, relaxed, & patient. Generating joy during your practice will improve the experience.

