

Mindfulness Exercises: A Pocket Guide

Mindfulness exercises can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and increasing self-awareness. This guide aims to provide a selection of simple exercises that can be practiced between sessions to promote mindfulness.

What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a form of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment.

Exercises

1 Body Scan

- A quick check in with the physical body, just noticing what's going on.
- **Instructions:** close your eyes and mentally scan your body from head to toe, noticing any tension or discomfort.
- **Purpose:** increases body awareness and can provide information for later trauma processing.

2 Mindfulness of the Five Senses

- Tune in to the five senses to feel more grounded in the physical body.
- **Instructions:** identify a stimulus for each sense (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) and focus on each one individually. If your mind wanders, gently guide it back to the chosen stimulus.
- **Purpose:** increases present moment awareness and encourages engagement in mindfulness practice.

3 Mindful Breathing

- Pay attention to your own breathing, regardless of how you're doing it.
- **Instructions:** notice the rhythm of your breath, inhaling through your nose and exhaling slowly through your mouth. Use your diaphragm for breathing. The goal is to notice and observe, not to master a technique.
- **Purpose:** centers and calms the mind, promoting relaxation and focus.

4 Mindfulness of Enjoyable Activities

- Incorporate mindfulness into daily activities that you enjoy.
- **Instructions:** as you do each chosen activity, aim to focus solely on the task at hand. If your mind wanders or you encounter a distraction, acknowledge it then gently return your focus to the activity.
- **Purpose:** develops mindfulness in daily life, improving attention and appreciation of positive experiences.

Key Points

- Mindfulness is simple observation and acceptance of the present moment.
- It is a powerful tool for promoting self-awareness and reducing stress.
- The aim of these present moment exercises is to observe and accept, not to master any particular techniques.