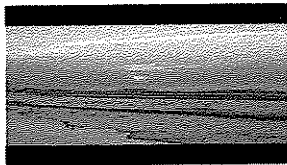


What is mindfulness?



Deep Breathing

Let's practice together...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsxXmr-Mk>



Mindfulness is noticing

- 1 Identify
- 2 Evaluate
- 3 Respond
- 4 Relax



Does meditation work?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aw712anWmY>



Signs of stress

- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional



Mindfulness for Exams

STOP
when you start getting anxious or noticing anxiety during the exam

DROP
your pencil or your hands from the keyboard or mouse,
place hands flat on cool surface (like the desktop), or on your knees.

ROLL
gently roll your head and shoulders,
relax & visualize something you like (ex: beach)



Apps for Wellness

Breathe2Relax
Headspace
Mind Shift
Stop Panic & Anxiety
Worry Box



Wellness on Campus

UCF Programs

RWC Exercise
WHPS
- Massages
- Biofeedback
Arboretum

UCF CAPS

Individual Counseling
Therapist Assisted Online
Groups
- Mindfulness for Anxiety
- Healthy Emotion Management



CAPS Information

LOCATION: Counseling Building - Bldg #27 (Near Health Center)
TELEPHONE: 407-823-2811
WEBSITE: www.caps.sdes.ucf.edu
HOURS: Monday-Thursday 8am - 6pm*
Walk-in hours 8-5
Appointment only 5-6
Friday 8am-5pm
Walk-in hours 8-4
Appointment only 4-5



CAPS Online

ARE YOU IN A CRISIS?

After-hours crisis services available by phone

CRISIS HOTLINE

407-823-2811



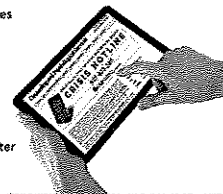
For more information visit caps.sdes.ucf.edu/emergency



CAPS Online

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- @UCFCAPS
- UCFCAPS
- UCF Counseling Center



what is mindfulness?



Have you ever noticed that when you are doing quite familiar and repetitive tasks, like driving your car, or vacuuming, that your mind is often miles away thinking about something else? You may be fantasising about going on a vacation, worrying about some upcoming event, or thinking about any number of other things.

In either case you are not focusing on your current experience, and you are not really in touch with the 'here and now.' This way of operating is often referred to as **automatic pilot** mode.

Mindfulness is the opposite of automatic pilot mode. It is about experiencing the world that is firmly in the 'here and now.' This mode is referred to as the **being** mode. It offers a way of freeing oneself from automatic and unhelpful ways of thinking and responding.

Benefits of Mindfulness

By learning to be in mindful mode more often, it is possible to develop a new habit that helps to weaken old, unhelpful and automatic thinking habits. For people with emotional problems, these old habits can involve being overly pre-occupied with thinking about the future, the past, themselves, or their emotions in a negative way. Mindfulness training in this case does not aim to immediately control, remove, or fix this unpleasant experience. Rather, it aims to develop a skill to place you in a better position to break free of or not 'buy into' these unhelpful habits that are causing distress and preventing positive action.

Core Features of Mindfulness

Observing

The first major element of mindfulness involves observing your experience in a manner that is more direct and sensual (**sensing mode**), rather than being analytical (**thinking mode**). A natural tendency of the mind is to try and think about something rather than directly experience it. Mindfulness thus aims to shift one's focus of attention away from thinking to simply observing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (e.g., touch, sight, sound, smell, taste) with a kind and gentle curiosity.

Describing

This aspect of mindfulness relates to noticing the very fine details of what you are observing. For example, if you are observing something like a tangerine, the aim is to describe what it looks like, what is its shape, colour, and texture. You might place a descriptive name to it, like "orange", "smooth", or "round". The same process also can be applied to emotions (e.g. "heavy", "tense")

Participating Fully

An aim of mindfulness is to allow yourself to consider the whole of your experience, without excluding anything. Try to notice all aspects of whatever task or activity you are doing, and do it with your full care and attention.

Being Non-judgemental

It is important to adopt an accepting stance towards your experience. A significant reason for prolonged emotional distress relates to attempts to avoid or control your experience. When being more mindful, no attempt is made to evaluate experiences or to say that they are good, bad, right, or wrong, and no attempt is made to immediately control or avoid the experience. Accepting all of one's experience is one of the most challenging aspects of mindfulness, and takes time and practice to develop. Bringing a kind and gentle curiosity to one's experience is one way of adopting a non-judgmental stance.



Focusing on One Thing at a Time

When observing your own experience, a certain level of effort is required to focus your attention on only one thing at a time, from moment to moment. It is natural for distracting thoughts to emerge while observing, and there is a tendency to follow and 'chase' these thoughts with more thinking. The art of 'being present' is to develop the skill of noticing when you have drifted away from the observing and sensing mode, into thinking mode. When this happens it is not a mistake, but just acknowledge it has happened, and then gently return to observing your experience.

How to Become Mindful

Mindfulness is a skill that takes time to develop. It is not easy, and like any skill it requires a certain level of effort, time, patience, and ongoing practice.

Mindfulness can be taught in a number of ways. Meditation is one of the key techniques used in mindfulness training, but not the only technique. Contact your mental health professional for further information on mindfulness training and whether it may be suited to your needs.



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mindfulness and letting go

Trying to control or avoid worries or other negative thinking by answering back, chasing, or suppressing these negative thoughts can sometimes *strengthen* this negative experience rather than diminish it. Mindfulness is one way of skilfully disengaging from or letting go of negative thinking.

This approach involves practicing how to notice when you are automatically drifting into negative thinking and then skilfully redirecting your attention back to the present, to the here and now



It may be helpful to think of this approach in terms of a radio. That is, imagine that the negative thoughts that drift into your mind as coming from a loud radio that is tuned to a station where the thoughts are very negative and seem to be shouting at you.

The skill in mindfulness is not so much about trying to turn the radio off, but changing the way you listen to the radio. In this way the volume of the radio station can be reduced, and therefore seem less disruptive and distressing.

However, the important thing to remember is this is not a quick fix, it is not easy, and requires regular practice. The thoughts may still shout at you, but you are changing the way you listen. Begin with the formal practice described in this information sheet. Just like any skill, such as learning a musical instrument, you need to practice, practice, practice! By practicing daily you may eventually become better at letting go, and be able to do things in a more informal way.



Steps for Letting Go

To begin, it may be best to start by practicing with minor concerns before moving onto major worries or negative thoughts.



1) To begin the practice, sit down in a chair and adopt a relaxed and alert posture, then ask yourself, **what am I experiencing right now?** What thoughts are around, what feelings are around, and what body sensations?

Allow yourself to just acknowledge, observe and describe these experiences to yourself, without trying to change them or answer the thoughts back. Spend 30 seconds to 1 minute just doing this.



2) Now bringing **your focus of awareness to your breath**, focusing on the sensations of your breath as it moves back and forth in your belly. Binding your awareness to the back and forth movements of the sensations in your belly from moment to moment, and letting all thoughts go. Maybe say to yourself 'relax' or 'let go' on each outward breath. Spend about 30 seconds to 1 minute doing this.

3) Now **expanding your awareness to sensing your whole body breathing**, being aware of sensations throughout your body. If there are any strong feelings around, maybe saying to yourself "whatever it is, it is OK, just let me feel it." Allowing yourself to breathe with these feelings, and if your mind wanders to bothersome thoughts just acknowledge and let go of these - focussing back on sensing your breath. Continue doing this for about 1 minute.

TIP: You can try increasing the time of steps 2 & 3 as you start to get more familiar with this skill.