

What is Mindfulness?

You may have heard that mindfulness — the ability to be fully present in the moment — can have numerous benefits, everything from decreased stress and sadness to increased focus and happiness, according to general mindfulness research. But what exactly is mindfulness? And, how can you recognise it and reap its many benefits? Mindfulness meditation practice is one way to truly experience the current moment and integrate that awareness into your everyday life.



8 meditation techniques that cultivate mindfulness

Taken from [Headspace.com/mindfulness](https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness)

Here's a breakdown of eight of the more popular mindfulness techniques — all of which are used in the **Headspace app**. Some will sound intriguing, while others may not be your cup of tea. See which ones work best for you.

1. Focused Attention: Likely the most common form of meditation, this technique uses the breath to anchor the mind and maintain awareness. Focus your attention on the breath — specifically the rise and fall of the chest — and return to the breath whenever you get distracted or notice your mind starting to wander.

2. Body Scan: This technique, which uses meditation to connect with the body, involves scanning your body from head to toe and being aware of any discomfort, sensations, or aches that exist (which could be indicators of stress and anxiety).

3. Noting: This is a mindfulness technique in which you “note” a particular thought or feeling when you become distracted during meditation. The practice of noting helps to create space and learn more about our habits, tendencies, and conditioning.

4. Loving Kindness: Instead of focusing on the breath, this technique involves focusing on the image of different people: people we know, people we don't; people we like, people we don't. We direct well-wishes and goodwill first to ourselves, and then, as a ripple effect, to others, which helps us let go of unhappy feelings we may be experiencing.

5. Skillful Compassion: Similar to the loving kindness meditation technique, this one involves focusing on a person you know or love and paying attention to the sensations arising from the heart. It's aptly named because it's thought to be helpful in opening our hearts and minds for the benefit of other people, which in turn fosters a feeling of happiness in our own mind.

6. Visualization: This technique uses visualization, to focus on a person or something more abstract, to hold attention. The idea here is that the familiar image will help create and maintain a relaxed focus.

7. Resting Awareness: Rather than focusing on the breath or a visualization, this technique involves letting the mind rest; thoughts may enter, but instead of distracting you and pulling you away from the present moment, they simply leave.

8. Reflection: For this technique, ask yourself a question, for example, “What are you most grateful for?” (Note that asking yourself a question using the second person — you — will discourage the intellectual mind from trying to answer it rationally.) Be aware of the feelings, not the thoughts, that arise when you focus on the question. Here is [a video](#) with more instruction on how to use the reflection meditation technique

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MINDFULNESS IS ABOUT BEING AWARE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT, NOT DWELLING ON THE PAST OR WORRYING ABOUT THE FUTURE. ITS ABOUT SIMPLY BEING INSTEAD OF CONSTANTLY DOING; OF BEING GRATEFUL FOR WHAT WE HAVE NOW AND BEING COMPASSIONATE WITH OURSELVES & OTHERS.

HAPPY IN THE MOMENT



- Video 1: Mindfulness is...being alive and knowing it!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNojLd_Jbh8
- Video 2: Letting Go of Stress
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxyVCjp48S4>
- Video 3: Meditation – Training the Monkey Mind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxyVCjp48S4>
- Video 4: Changing Perspective and Understanding Our Thoughts
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN6g2mr0p3Q>
- Video 5: Playing Attention – A Guided Mindfulness Session
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgXZW6Xqokw>

If you like these Mindfulness videos, Headspace and Calm are excellent apps which you can use to support your own mindfulness practice outside of school. The starter packs for these apps are free to use!

