



**connect**

wellbeing, ability, recovery

# MINDFULNESS

## Getting Started

Your first steps to mindfulness practice: mindfulness and the everyday, maintaining an open-minded approach, posture and breathing, and some exercises to help you get started.

# Mindfulness and the Everyday

Mindfulness in everyday life requires us to break out of the pattern of automatic pilot through a process of stopping and 'waking up'. When we stop, we remind ourselves to come back to mindful awareness, and back to the present moment. When we recognise that we have drifted away from the present moment, we can try the following:

- Bring our attention to our posture
- Feel our feet on the ground
- Tune into the sensations in the body
- Bring awareness to the movements of the body
- Take a few conscious breaths
- Be aware of what is coming in through our senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching
- Practice a half-smile in recognition of coming back to ourselves!

## Tips for Mindfulness Practice

To help get the most from mindfulness practice, it is important to approach it with an open mind. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Whatever you experience, just bring awareness to it
- Maintain an attitude of openness and curiosity
- Meet each experience with acceptance
- Remind yourself that all experiences pass - even the unpleasant ones
- Maintain a discipline of regular practice with an attitude of self-kindness
- Let go of expectations, thoughts, judgements - they are all in the realm of thought - just let them go.
- Remember your intention and why you are persevering with this



## A Practice for Posture

Meditation begins and ends in the body. It involves taking the time to pay attention to where we are and what's going on, and that starts with being aware of our body. That very act can be calming, since our body has internal rhythms that help it relax if we give it a chance.

- Take your SEAT. Whatever you're sitting on - a chair, a meditation cushion, a park bench - find a spot that gives you a stable, solid seat, not perching or hanging back.
- If on a cushion on the floor, cross your LEGS comfortably in front of you. If on a chair, it's good if the bottoms of your feet are touching the floor.
- Straighten, but don't stiffen, your UPPER BODY. The spine has natural curvature. Let it be there. Your head and shoulders can comfortably rest on top of your vertebrae.
- Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Then let your HANDS drop onto the tops of your legs. With your upper arms at your sides, your hands will land in the right spot.
- Drop your chin a little and let your GAZE fall gently downward. You may let your eyelids lower. If you feel the need, you may lower them completely, but it's not necessary to close your eyes when meditating.
- Be there for a few moments. RELAX. Now get up and go about your day.

## Mindfulness Breathing

- Sit in a comfortable posture with your spine erect, though not rigid. Let your shoulders relax.
- Let your eyes close gently if it feels comfortable.
- First, simply be aware of how your breath is, whether it is deep or shallow. Allow yourself for a few minutes just to be with it as it is.
- Then gradually bring your attention to the area around your navel and let the belly soften. As you inhale, sense the belly expanding and as you exhale sense the belly contracting. Settle into the rhythm of expansion and contraction.



- It is inevitable that thoughts, or feelings will at times obscure your awareness of the sensation of breath; in these moments, notice what is happening and renew your intention to settle back into the awareness of the breath. The power of intention is your greatest ally at this stage.
- The gentler you are in bringing your mind back, the more you will experience ease. Even if the breath wanders off a thousand times, that is OK; your job is simply to bring your awareness back to the breathing.





Discover more information on our website:

**[www.i-connect.space](http://www.i-connect.space)**