

Mindfulness Activities and Ideas

*Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way:
on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.*
~ Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mindfulness is a mind and body practice that centers on the connections between the brain, mind, body, and behavior. The goal is to make mindfulness a habit or a routine as part of a healthy lifestyle. Mindfulness participants are encouraged to find what works best for them, actively participate in formal mindfulness trainings (whether that is a class, a book, or a download) and make a commitment to practice mindfulness on a regular basis. Mindfulness can be practiced is as little as 1 to 5 minutes! With practice, one can become more mindful throughout the day, and throughout life, not just during the time of formal mindfulness practice. To learn more, read OSU Extension's *Introduction to Mindfulness* fact sheet: go.osu.edu/intro-to-mindfulness.

Focus on breathing

- Breathe in for four seconds, then breathe out for four seconds. Repeat this exercise five times.
- Listen to *Dr. Benzo's Mindful Breathing Lab* at Mayo Clinic:
<http://www.mayo.edu/research/labs/mindful-breathing/audio-files>
- Visit *Just Breathe* and synch your breathing with the video: <https://yp4h.osu.edu/justbreathe>

Use your senses

- Look around you and name three things you can hear, then two things you can see, and finally one sensation that you feel.
- Turn down the lights and listen to soothing music or sounds.
- Use a chime or a bell, ring it once, and just observe the tone until you cannot hear it any longer.
- Read OSU Extension Blog Article:
Use Your Senses. <https://go.osu.edu/use-your-senses>

Eating and drinking

- Focus your attention to the sensations, smells, or sounds you observe from the moment you start brewing your coffee or steeping your tea, to the moment you finish your drink.
- Listen to *Mindful Eating Meditations* at the Center for Mindful Eating:
<https://thecenterformindfuleating.org/FREE-Meditations>
- Read OSU Extension Blog Articles:
Mindful Eating Tips. <https://go.osu.edu/mindful-eating>
Mind Your Meals This Holiday Season. <https://go.osu.edu/mind-your-meals-this-holiday-season>

Move your body

- Jump on a trampoline. Run in place. Take a walk. Try a few yoga poses. Touch your toes. Go for a swim.
- Place your feet flat on the floor (standing or sitting). Breathe in for four seconds, hold and release for four seconds. Repeat 3-5 times. Notice how your feet feel, the ground feels, how your weight shifts, etc.
- Explore *Accessible Yoga: 3 Tree Pose Variations for Every Body*:
<https://www.yogauonline.com/yoga-pose-library/accessible-yoga-3-tree-pose-variations-for-every-body>
- Watch *Live from Currituck Extension: Yoga with Olivia*:
Yoga Flow: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v_Ye2KAKKU
Desk Yoga: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHG1zhUO95s>



Connect with nature

- Take a walk and notice the beauty around you. Slow down and observe. Practice gratitude and appreciation.
- Read OSU Extension Blog Articles:
 - A Walk in the Woods.* <https://go.osu.edu/a-walk-in-the-woods>
 - Thanks, Doc, for the Nature Prescription!* <https://go.osu.edu/thanks-doc-for-the-nature-prescription>
 - Moving Mindfully.* <https://go.osu.edu/moving-mindfully>

Solitude and silence

- Sit in a quiet spot. Listen to relaxing music. Light a candle. Rub your hands with your favorite scented lotion.
- Focus on your breath, a mantra, or an image for 5-20 minutes. The single point concentration allows the mind to settle while listening to your body's inner dialogue.
- Read OSU Extension Blog Article:
 - Noises Off: The Benefit of Silence.* <https://go.osu.edu/the-benefit-of-silence>

Observe animal behavior

- Watch fish in an aquarium. Love on your pet. Hang up bird feeders and watch who visits. Walk a dog. Watch the pollinators in a flower garden.
- How Animals Help Us Live in the Moment:
 - <https://www.londonmindful.com/blog/how-animals-help-us-live-in-the-moment>
- Mindfulness and Your Dog:
 - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/mindfulness-and-your-dog>

Coloring and creativity

- Embrace your inner child. Grab a coloring page and your favorite colored pencils, crayons, markers, or paint.
- Read an uplifting book. Start a journal. End your day by writing down 5 things that you are grateful for.
- Download and print a finger labyrinth (<https://labyrinthology.org/download-a-labyrinth>) or learn to draw your own labyrinth (<https://labyrinthology.org/make-a-labyrinth>).

Include the kids

- Choose any of the mindfulness practice suggested above and try them with youth and children.
- Discover *25 Fun Mindfulness Activities for Children and Teens*:
 - <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities>
- Learn more about *Yoga for Kids*. <https://4h.uaex.edu/programs/healthy-living/yoga-for-kids.aspx>

Explore free resources

- Listen to the free *Mindfulness Practices* recordings from the OSU Wexner Medical Center:
 - <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/integrative-complementary-medicine/mindfulness-practices>
- Visit the *Virtual Calming* room created by the Sacramento City Unified School District in California:
 - <https://calmingroom.scusd.edu>
- Take 60 seconds and watch your current worry shrink away: <https://www.pixelthoughts.co>
- Listen to a variety of free *Guided Meditations* from the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center:
 - <http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations> (in English and Spanish)
- If you are an OSU employee, check *Your Plan for Health* and search for options like Mindfulness 101, Yoga 101, and Emotional Intelligence 101. <https://yp4h.osu.edu>

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