



Practice Mindfulness!

Keeping your mind in the moment helps to keep you calm and reduce potential negative emotions or reactions. It helps your body be healthy, too.

Here's a practice for keeping your mind in the moment. Focus on walking and the way your body feels as you do the following exercise!

1. Walk fast for 10 seconds, and then switch to walking slowly for 10 more seconds.
2. Now STOP for 10 seconds—what was the difference between the two types of walking?
3. How did they feel in your body?
4. What did your mind experience?
5. Balance on your feet. Tip gently to one side and then the other, noticing the weight shift.
6. Now walk slowly in a small space heel-to-toe and noticing the feel of your feet on the ground as you walk. You may notice pressure of weight on your leg.
7. You might say to yourself the words “walking, walking” with each step or breath.
8. What did you notice? How did that feel?



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MINDFULNESS:

Keeping your mind on the right track.

MIND • FUL • NESS

(noun) A way of thinking that nurtures happier and healthier living.

Ever notice how your mind seems to wander from thought to thought? Like a puppy who goes from toy to toy? You're not alone.

Thousands of thoughts go through our minds every day. But you have the ability to control them. All it takes some mindfulness, or the ability to become aware of your thoughts and use them to your advantage.





There are many simple things you can do to start becoming more mindful now. It starts with recognizing your thoughts and how they affect you. Here are some ways that you can do it.

Practice breathing

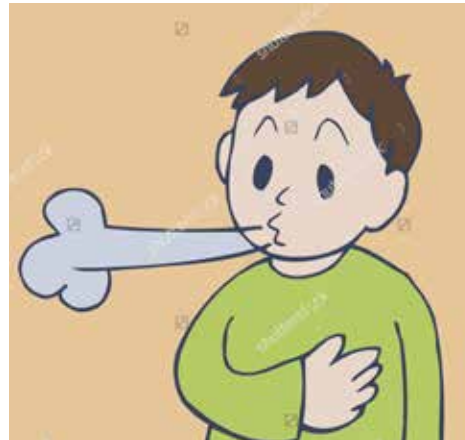
- 1 Sit up straight with your feet on the floor.
- 2 Put one hand on your belly, just below the belly button.
- 3 Take five slow, deep breaths through your nose while your mouth stays closed.

This is called "deep breathing."

It helps to slow down your thoughts and keep you calm. Thoughts may come and go as you breathe, and that's okay. Just don't let them stay long. Stay concentrated on your breathing. You'll be amazed how much calmer you feel.

Notice the coolness of your breath, and your hand rise and fall on your belly as you breathe in and out.

Write a sentence or two about how you felt as you went through the breathing exercise.



Train your brain!

You can train your brain to manage those random thoughts and feelings that can make you feel uncomfortable. Training your brain begins by becoming aware of your thoughts, and how they impact your emotions and feelings. This is called being mindful.



Write a sentence or two about how you COULD HAVE slowed down your thoughts to become calmer and able to respond more effectively.

Fight or flight

Your mind often reacts to keep you safe. When you are in danger, your thoughts can prompt the energy you need to run or fight, also known as the "fight or flight" response.

But most days, you aren't facing dangerous situations (at least we hope not). You might be agitated about daily chores, a bad grade, or not doing well in a game or sport. But don't let those emotions get the better of you. Recognizing and learning to control those emotions is key to being mindful, and will ultimately make you happier, healthier and help you work better with others.

We all have these thoughts and emotions, so don't ever be afraid to talk to someone about them. Talk to a trusted friend, parent, teacher, or school counselor.

Draw a picture of a situation where you felt like your thoughts were making you feel uncomfortable.