



SIMPLE MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

Here's a small compilation of mindfulness exercises. Keep in mind that these are tools and nothing more. Exercises are not what mindfulness is about, but they will help you experience certain states that will ultimately lead to what mindfulness really is, which is seeing who you really are.

Practice these anywhere and anytime. They are simple but can take some time to really use well.

1. mindful hand awareness exercise

Grasp your hands really tight and hold for a 5 to 10 seconds, then release and pay attention to how your hands feel. Keep your attention focused on the feeling for as long as you can.

2. mental focus exercise

Stare at any object and try to remain focused on just that object for as long as possible. Keep a mental watch on when your mind starts to wander, then just bring it back to the object. The longer you can remain focused, the more your mindfulness will increase.

3. tactile exercise

Pinch your arm and pay close attention to how it feels and what your emotions begin doing. Pay attention to the pain it causes, and how it radiates out from the site where you pinch. This exercise can really tune you in to how your body deals with discomfort and what emotions rise. Do you get angry when you feel pain?

4. musical stimuli exercise

Listen to your favourite song and pay attention to how it makes you feel. What emotions stir? What memories come up, and how do those memories make you feel? Engage the emotions and see where they lead.

5. olfactory sense exercise

Smell something strong like coffee beans or perfume and pay close attention to what happens in your nose, and then what feelings these scents evoke.

6. taste exercise

Just as in step 5, but with taste instead of smell.

7. melting exercise

Sit and relax, and imagine yourself melting into everything around you. You might begin to feel at one with everything after some practice.



8. full sensory awareness exercise

Wherever you are, just stop and look around when safe to do so. Become aware of everything that your senses pick up. How do you feel? Do you feel over-stimulated? Do you feel anxious?

9. silence exercise

Spend an hour or two in complete silence, and just absorb your surroundings. Earplugs might help this exercise.

10. 'I' exercise

Become aware of every time you use the word "I" in a sentence. This forces us to focus on how self-centered we all are.

11. challenge your beliefs exercise

Take one long-held belief and pretend that you believe the direct opposite. Make a mental note of how you feel and what thoughts come into your mind.

12. cause and effect exercise

Contemplate cause and effect for everything that you do for some predetermined amount of time.

13. the mindful plot exercise

Watch a movie and observe how you become engrossed in the story. Take mental note of your emotions as you watch the film.

14. do the same as 13, but with music

15. undivided attention exercise

Do something around the house that you've never done before and do it with utter and undivided attention.

16. candle staring exercise

Stare at a candle flame for ten minutes straight while studying everything you can about it. When your mind wanders, become aware of where it's going, then bring it back to the candle flame.