

## Thoughts from clinically licensed FCH EAP team members:

In the stressful world of work and personal life, people experience more overwhelm and pressure than they ever have. It can be hard to understand what it means to be “mindful” in life, or to try to use “mindfulness” to maintain calm and peacefulness. You don’t have to take any formal class to begin.

The ability for a person to be fully present and aware of what they are observing, thinking and feeling is the basic start of being mindful. When we pay attention to the here and now moments of our experiences, and remove judgement, we are mindful. This skill is important and helpful if we want more emotional balance day to day. We are more able to choose how we respond to things happening in our life if we slow down, breathe deeply, calmly and take pause. Having the intention to take care of ourselves will benefit all parts of our life. When we learn positive ways to use our own breathing and focus of thought, we become mindful of our authentic selves. The hope is that we then decide what we need most and how to best to keep balance in our busy and important lives at work and home!

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## EAP Featured Article | June 2026

### How to Practice Mindfulness

**Adapted from Harvard Health:** [Click to view the original article](#)

It’s a busy world. You fold the laundry while keeping one eye on the kids and another on the television. You plan your day while listening to the radio and commuting to work, and then plan your weekend. But in the rush to accomplish necessary tasks, you may find yourself losing your connection with the present moment— missing out on what you’re doing and how you’re feeling. Did you notice whether you felt well-rested this morning or that forsythia is in bloom along your route to work?

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment. Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness.

#### **Mindfulness techniques**

There is more than one way to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment. All mindfulness techniques are a form of meditation.

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- **Begin by sitting quietly.** Focus on your natural breathing or on a word or “mantra” that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judgment and return to your focus on breath or mantra.
- **Body sensations.** Notice subtle body sensations such as an itch or tingling without judgment and let them pass. Notice each part of your body in succession from head to toe.
- **Sensory.** Notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. Name them “sight,” “sound,” “smell,” “taste,” or “touch” without judgment and let them go.
- **Emotions.** Allow emotions to be present without judgment. Practice a steady and relaxed naming of emotions: “joy,” “anger,” “frustration.” Accept the presence of the emotions without judgment and let them go.
- **Urge surfing.** Cope with cravings (for addictive substances or behaviors) and allow them to pass. Notice how your body feels as the craving enters. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the certain knowledge that it will subside.

### Getting started on your own

Some types of meditation primarily involve concentration – repeating a phrase or focusing on the sensation of breathing, allowing the parade of thoughts that inevitably arise to come and go. Concentration meditation techniques, as well as other activities such as tai chi or yoga, can induce the well-known relaxation response, which is very valuable in reducing the body’s response to stress.

- **Go with the flow.** In mindfulness meditation, once you establish concentration, you observe the flow of inner thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without judging them as good or bad.
- **Pay attention.** You also notice external sensations such as sounds, sights, and touch that make up your moment-to-moment experience. The challenge is not to latch onto a particular idea, emotion, or sensation, or to get caught in thinking about the past or the future. Instead, you watch what comes and goes in your mind and discover which mental habits produce a feeling of well-being or suffering.
- **Stay with it.** At times, this process may not seem relaxing at all, but over time it provides a key to greater happiness and self-awareness as you become comfortable with a wider and wider range of your experiences.

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- **Practice acceptance.** Above all, mindfulness practice involves accepting whatever arises in your awareness at each moment. It involves being kind and forgiving toward yourself.
- **Gently redirect.** If your mind wanders into planning, daydreaming, or criticism, notice where it has gone and gently redirect it to sensations in the present.
- **Try and try again.** If you miss your intended meditation session, simply start again. By practicing accepting your experience during meditation, it becomes easier to accept whatever comes your way during the rest of your day.

### Learning to stay in the present

A less formal approach to mindfulness can also help you to stay in the present and fully participate in your life. You can choose any task or moment to practice informal mindfulness, whether you are eating, showering, walking, touching a partner, or playing with a child or grandchild.

- **Start by bringing your attention to the sensations in your body.** Breathe in through your nose, allowing the air downward into your lower belly. Let your abdomen expand fully.
- **Now breathe out through your mouth.** Notice the sensations of each inhalation and exhalation. Proceed with the task at hand slowly and with full deliberation
- **Engage your senses fully.** Notice each sight, touch, and sound so that you savor every sensation. When you notice that your mind has wandered from the task at hand, gently bring your attention back to the sensations of the moment.

### Look for other opportunities to incorporate mindfulness into your routine

If you are interested in mindfulness meditation, attending a class or listening to a guided meditation recording can be a great way to begin. Additionally, you can practice informal mindfulness during various tasks or moments in your daily life. This could include activities such as eating, showering, walking, or spending time with family and loved ones.

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