

# Mindfulness

A short guide  
with mindfulness colouring



# About this guide

Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves noticing what's happening in the present moment, without judgement. You might take notice and be aware of your mind, body, or surroundings.

The technique has roots in Buddhism and meditation, but you don't have to be spiritual, or have any particular beliefs, to try it.

Mindfulness aims to help you:

- Become more self-aware.
- Feel calmer and less stressed.
- Feel more able to choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings.
- Cope with difficult or unhelpful thoughts.
- Be kinder towards yourself.

This guide describes exercises you can try at home, and includes a colouring page to encourage mindfulness.

Many people find that practising mindfulness helps them manage their day-to-day wellbeing. Studies show that it can also help manage some common mental health problems, like depression or anxiety. But it doesn't always work for everyone.

For more information on mindfulness and whether it's right for you, visit [mind.org.uk/mindfulness](https://www.mind.org.uk/mindfulness)

## How does mindfulness work?

Mindfulness works by taking your focus to the present moment and away from other thoughts. The way we think, and what we think about, can affect how we feel and act. For example, if you think or worry a lot about upsetting past or future events, you might often feel sad or anxious.

It's understandable to want to stop thinking about difficult things. But trying to get rid of upsetting thoughts can often make us think about them even more.

The theory behind mindfulness is that, by using various techniques to bring your attention to the present, you can:

**Notice how thoughts come and go in your mind.** You may learn that they don't have to define who you are, or your experience of the world.

**Notice what your body is telling you.** For example, you might feel tension or anxiety in your body, such as a fast heartbeat, tense muscles or shallow breathing.

**Create space between you and your thoughts.** With this space, you can reflect on the situation and react more calmly.

“ **When I feel anxiety building, mindfulness helps me to keep calm by becoming more in touch with the situation.** ”

## Mindfulness exercises you can try

**Mindful eating.** This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, you could try this when drinking a cup of tea or coffee. You could focus on the temperature, how the liquid feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.

**Mindful moving, walking or running.** While exercising, try focusing on the feeling of your body moving. If you go for a mindful walk, you might notice the breeze against your skin or the feeling of your feet on the ground. Notice how your hands feel against different textures, or the different smells around you.

**Body scan.** This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of your body. Start from the top of your head and move all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation in different parts of your body.

**Mindful colouring and drawing.** Rather than try to draw something in particular, focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper. You could use a mindfulness colouring book, print an image online, or use the colouring page in the back of this leaflet.

**Mindful meditation.** This involves sitting quietly to focus on your breathing, thoughts, sensations in your body or things you can sense around you. Try to bring your attention back to the present if your mind starts to wander. Many people also find that yoga helps them to concentrate on their breathing and focus on the present moment.

The above examples are not the only ways you can practise mindfulness. Lots of activities can be done mindfully.

Different things work for different people, so if you don't find one exercise useful, try another. You can also try adapting them to fit in with your daily life, such as mindfully cooking dinner or folding laundry.

## Tips on getting the most from mindfulness

**Pay attention.** Focus on things you can see, hear, smell, taste or touch. For example, when you take a shower, make a special effort to really pay attention to how the water feels on your skin.

**Take notice.** When your mind wanders, which is just what minds do, simply notice where your thoughts have drifted to. Some people find it helpful to name and acknowledge the feelings and thoughts that come up. For example, you could think to yourself 'this is a feeling of anger', or 'here is the thought that I'm not good enough'.

**Be aware and accepting.** Notice and be aware of the emotions you are feeling, or sensations in your body. You don't need to try and get rid of any feelings or thoughts. Try to observe and accept these feelings with friendly curiosity, and without judgement.

**Choose to return.** Choose to bring your attention back to the present moment. You could do this by focusing on your breathing or another sensation in your body. Or you could focus on your surroundings – what you can see, hear, smell, touch or taste.

**Be kind to yourself.** Remember that mindfulness can be difficult and our minds will always wander. Try not to be critical of yourself. When you notice your mind wandering, you can just gently bring yourself back to the exercise.

## Practical tips for mindfulness

To get more out of mindfulness exercises, there are some practical things you can try to help improve your experience:

**Set aside regular time to practise.** Regular, short periods of mindfulness can work better than occasional long ones. If you struggle to find the time, try choosing 1 or 2 things you already do daily, and do them mindfully. For example, you could practise mindfulness while doing the washing up or taking a shower.

**Make yourself comfortable.** It can help to do mindfulness in a space where you feel safe, comfortable and won't be easily distracted. Some people also find that it helps to be outdoors or surrounded by nature.

**Take it slowly.** Try to build up your practice bit by bit. You don't need to set ambitious goals or put pressure on yourself. Remember, you're learning a new skill that will take time to develop.

**Don't worry about whether you're doing it right.** Try not to worry about doing the exercises correctly. Focus on using them in the ways that are most helpful for you. Many people find it takes a while to feel comfortable doing mindfulness exercises.

“ **Mindfulness is a skill. It requires work like any therapy, and requires practice like any skill.** ”

## Mindful colouring

Use this page to practise mindful colouring. Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper.



Visit [pauseformind.org.uk](https://www.pauseformind.org.uk) for more mindfulness activities.

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Join us. Together we won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

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