

Three Quick and Easy Ways to Bring the Benefits of Mindfulness Into Your Day

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It seems as if everywhere you look, someone is touting the benefits of mindfulness.

What is mindfulness and why is it something you might want to know?

Consider mindfulness as a way of letting go of the mind, of releasing thoughts and becoming more aware of oneself as a living being. In addition to releasing stress, this tool can give us an opportunity to slow down time, gain perspective, feel more in control of our own emotions and respond to people in ways that are more aligned with our values and reduce stress.

Of course, that's if you can figure a way to build it into your day!

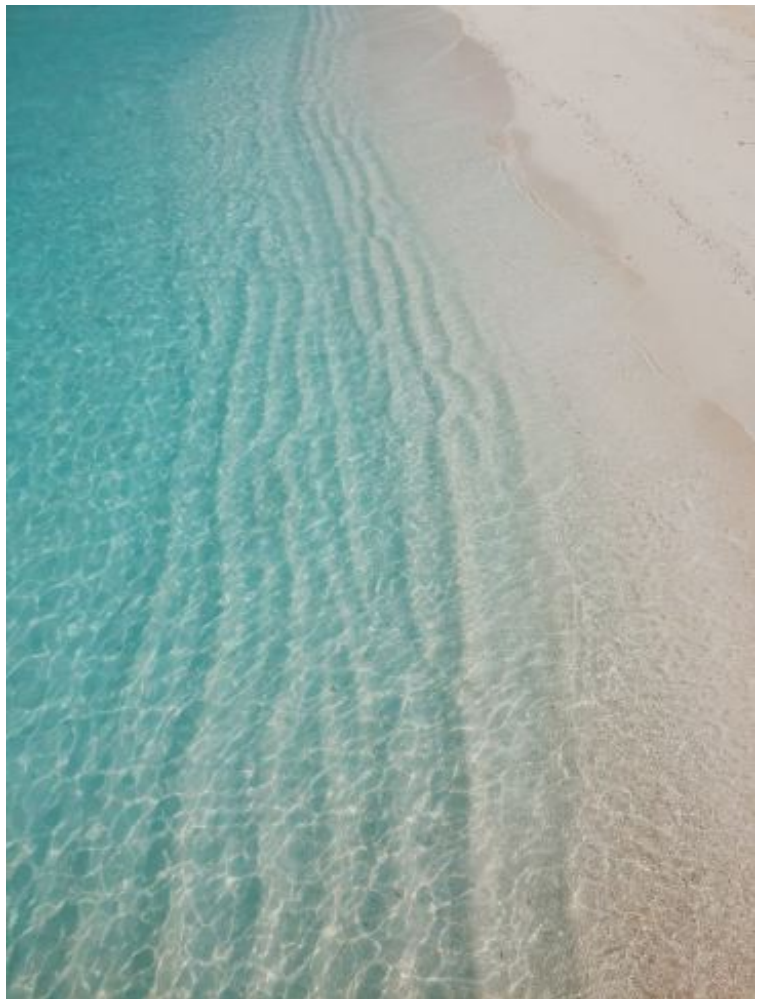
To help with that, I'm giving you three very short and easy experiences meant to introduce to you the benefits of mindfulness. In

a short time, using these tricks, you can taste what mindfulness has to offer. While they each take a minute or less, you will feel more of the benefits if you can do them longer or if you can do them frequently.

1) Have you ever seen something in the distance and looked ahead with curiosity trying to figure out what it is?

Or saw something so colorful that it filled your attention for a moment?

Or walked down a street lined with trees in bloom just taking in the flowers?



Living in NYC and walking a lot, I noticed how walking outside on beautiful days, I could get so attentive to the colors, textures, people, places that my mind felt clear. I could look ahead as if what I was seeing was a two-dimensional photo and take it in visually, without naming or judging it. I didn't even know about mindfulness then! With practice, it has become a powerful tool for me, giving me a chance to let go of thoughts and re-center myself within moments.



Try this:

Walking or sitting, shift your attention from your thoughts to your senses. Find something that can fill your visual field.

What colors do you see?

What shapes?

What textures?

What lines?

What is in the forefront what is farther back?

Investigate it with open curiosity:

What does it look like right now?

What else can you notice about it?

Even if it only holds your attention for a few seconds, it gives you the beginning of learning how to interrupt your habitual thinking patterns.

To try for longer you may want to think about exploring the visual details of one thing in your view.

Can you trace the outline and contours with your eyes?

Can you notice the small details in the surface and texture of the item?

If/when your mind wanders, just bring it back to the exploration.

2) Listening hard for something directs our attention away from our thoughts.

I use this sometimes when I am teaching a group of students to bring their attention to their surroundings. Oh, the quiet that it creates!

Try this:

Midstream the chatter in your head, in a conversation with yourself, take a moment to listen to yourself and wonder, "What am I going to think next?"

What happens? Wait for an answer.

Could you notice how your mind waited, listening for a second?

Try it again. "What are you going to think next?"

Don't think.

Just listen.

Let the thought come.

This gap between thoughts opens the possibility to interrupt thoughts and to experience a moment with a clear mind.

Do this a few times during the day, and investigate what that gap in the thinking feels like.

This is a short but powerful exercise. The impact comes from exploring the gap between the question and when the answer presents itself. If you can even feel a micro-moment of stillness, you will have begun to experience a mindful break.

If you do this often enough and combined with the other exercises, you may find yourself able to listen for longer periods of time without the soundtracks in your head filling the silences.

3) A short meditation: sit and count your breaths. It's that simple.

This is how I got started meditating every day. I just sat down and counted my breath as I inhaled and exhaled. I liked imagining the waves of the ocean coming onto the shore with the exhaled breath and drifting towards the sea on the inhale. Hearing the exhale as if the waves were lapping the shore helped me stay focused. You may find something that works for you.

Try this: Find a comfortable place to sit.

Close your eyes, or let your gaze fall on something so that you notice the peripheral vision.

Imagine your eyes spreading towards your ears.

Notice how your body shifts when you rest your gaze and shift your attention.

Next, without moving your gaze, give some attention to the air going in and out of your body. Just notice how it feels.

Then start counting. 1-inhale, 1-exhale, 2-inhale, 2-exhale.

If your mind wanders before 60, notice it. Let it be in your awareness as you continue counting breathes from the last number that you remember.

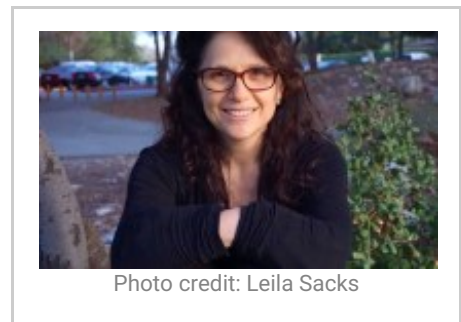
To do it for longer, just keep breathing and counting. Inevitably your mind will wander. That's great! When it does, you have the occasion to bring it back to the breath. Each time you bring the attention back to the breath, you exercise your mindfulness muscle! As you practice and advance, you can let go of counting and just focus on feeling the inhale and exhale in your body.

While there is a lot to read about mindfulness, the best way to learn about how it can help you is to experience it for yourself. I hope these three easy to do strategies give you a taste of what is possible.

[Click here to find more mindfulness tools for peaceful living.](#)

[Contact me](#) for a complimentary coaching session to explore more ways that you can integrate more of the benefits of mindfulness into your life.

Leah is a Certified Positive Psychology Coach who specializes in working with highly educated professional moms who want to reduce stress and bring more creativity, energy, and inspiration into their lives. Leah blends her backgrounds in leadership development, education and the performing arts with evidence-based practices to help women lead more integrated lives. [Contact Leah](#) for a complimentary coaching session and to learn more about coaching.



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