

MINDFUL MEDITATION

Secrets To Enhancing Emotional &
Physical Well-Being

CHECKLIST



Mindful Meditation Checklist

Mindful meditation isn't magic. It allows you to concentrate your awareness on the here and now. It increases our mental energy, allowing us to perform better and achieve more. Quite simply, mindful meditation makes us more efficient in many areas of our lives. This checklist will run you through the simple steps and strategies to know the real you and reaching your full potential.

Chapter 1: What Is Mindful Meditation?

Mindful meditation is actually very simple, yet it comes with great benefits.

The Origin Of Mindful Meditation

It's a Western practice with roots in thousands of years of Buddhism, where it's referred to as "Insight Meditation." As that name suggests, it is meant to develop our mental skills and

become more aware. However, mindful meditation is not associated with any specific ideology.

Mindfulness To Tackle Daily Challenges

When we practice mindful meditation consistently, we gain an inner calm that will help us deal with life's many challenges. How often have we become so stressed that we have consciously avoided thinking about our problems, which then only worsen as we become more stressed? Sometime, it may feel easier not to think at all. But in the long run, reality will take over.

Non-judgmental awareness allows us to remove ourselves mentally from the mental tsunami and remain calm in times of adversity. We become more connected to our experiences in a healthy, non-threatening way.

The Positive Impact Of Mindful Meditation

Mindful meditation has moved from the mystical to mainstream. Many studies have confirmed the benefits of regular mindful meditation.

1. Less stress-related illnesses
2. Better sleeping habits
3. Lower blood pressure
4. Better immune system
5. More energy
6. Better pain management
7. Better decision-making ability
8. Greater resilience when faced with adversity

Chapter 2: How to Practice Mindful Meditation

The Essentials

Wear comfortable clothing. You don't want to have your focus interrupted by a tight pair of pants or skirt. Find a comfortable seat. Ideally, it will be in a peaceful spot without clutter and noise. You can meditate indoors or outdoors.

Start your meditation with short sessions of around 10 minutes. This will make it easy to develop the habit of meditating and working your way up to half an hour or even a full hour.

Mornings or evenings are the best times, but any time you spend meditating works. You can also split your meditation sessions and do half when you get up and the second half before going to bed.

Getting Started With Mindful Meditation

Either sit in the traditional lotus position or simply relax in a comfortable chair, with your feet resting on the floor. Keep your spine straight but not stiff. Let your head hang naturally with a downward gaze.

Your hands should be resting comfortably on your thighs. You can keep your eyes open, but most people seem to prefer closing them. Do whatever works best for you. The goal is to get completely comfortable and not to worry about whether you are doing it right or wrong. Just do it, and you will enjoy the results.

Start focusing on your breathing. All your attention should be on how the air feels as you inhale deeply through your nose down to your stomach, then exhale. Notice the physical sensations of the air moving down your body, then being expelled through the nose. Become aware of the rise and fall in your chest as you inhale and exhale.

Don't worry if your attention wanders. This is perfectly normal. What is important is that you don't try to stop those intruding thoughts. Just let them flow through your mind non-judgmentally and return your focus to your breathing. If you find your thoughts wandering too often, don't worry. Simply observe

whatever is happening. Don't judge or blame yourself. Just observe what your mind is doing.

When you're done meditating, sit quietly for a moment before opening your eyes. Take a minute and observe what you are feeling. Again, it's important not to judge yourself. When you are ready, go about your day.

Meditation Helps You Overcome Stressful Situation

Daily mindful meditation will help you cope with stress, but even normal days can make it challenging to remain in focus and mindful. Your boss wants to see you in his office NOW. Your spouse has been argumentative all week. Your child, who has just received his or her driver's license yesterday, has disappeared with your car and five best friends. It's stressful, and it's called life. Mindfulness can help you cope with these adversities.

Walking Meditation

A walking meditation helps focus your scattered thoughts. It's a chance to work through the mental tsunami that can invariably ruin your day. You can do it anywhere, while walking to the store, to work, or through a park. Take care while crossing the street. When we walk in a normal fashion, we do so automatically, without awareness. We simply move forward from Point A to Point B. Not so with a walking meditation.

During walking meditation, keep your hands wherever they are most comfortable – at your side or in front of you. You may find it useful to mentally count out 10 steps at a time as you walk.

Instead of focusing on the rising and falling of your breath, you will focus on your feet as they rise and fall with each step. Be aware of your body as it shifts its weight as you walk.

Chapter 3: More Mindful Meditation Techniques

In addition to the breathing meditation, there are additional techniques that will help you enhance your awareness and become more mindful. So much is going on around us at all times, yet most of the time, we move through the day on autopilot. These exercises are designed to strengthen your mind, in the same way push-ups are meant to strengthen your body. They are also fun and will make your day more enjoyable and alive.

Focus on a Specific Object Meditation

You'll be keeping your eyes open for this meditation. The exercise is enormously helpful in preventing your focus from wandering.

Start by choosing an object. It can be anything – a flower, a picture, an interesting design, a candle ... anything that touches your fancy. It should be the right size for you to observe it easily in its entirety. The purpose of the object is to be your focal point when your attention strays.

Start by closing your eyes and focusing on your breathing for 5 minutes to become relaxed. When you feel ready, open your eyes and observe the chosen object. Notice any lights and shadows falling on the object.

Notice the texture. Is it smooth, bumpy, silky? Imagine what it would feel to the touch. Notice the different shades of color. Keep breathing slowly. Make no judgments about the object. You're simply an observer.

Continue as long as you wish. Ten minutes is a good time. If your mind wanders, let your awareness return to the object.

Since modern life can assault our senses on a daily basis, we can remain oblivious to the beauty around us. How often do we really notice our surroundings? This quiet exercise is helpful in keeping your focus sharp.

Body Scan Meditation

This mindful meditation is useful in releasing tension at the end of a day and in helping you fall asleep easily. Tension can frequently settle in specific areas of the body, such as shoulders,

bringing on aches and fatigue. This will draw attention to trouble spots and help you relax.

Sit or lay anywhere you are comfortable. Close your eyes and breathe in and out for 5 minutes to enhance relaxation. Shift your focus to your body.

As you breathe, become aware of various body parts. Start with the toes and feet. Move to the ankles and up the legs. As you notice any tension, breathe into it, then exhale.

Keep breathing as your awareness moves past your hips to your torso. Breathe into any tension that you may notice. Keep breathing and notice your arms, hands and fingers. Continue to breathe into spots that feel tense.

As you continue to breathe, move your awareness to your shoulders, neck, face, and skull. Breathe slowly into any tension spots.

Spend as much time on any tense spot as is necessary. This is a wonderful exercise to relieve tension, calm your mind and hone the way we deal with stress.

Counting Mindful Meditation

As with the other meditations, sit comfortably and practice the basic breathing meditation for five minutes to relax. Take a deep breath and inhale.

Wait a second and exhale while counting out the number 1 in your mind. Take another deep breath and inhale. Wait ... and count out the number 2. Continue doing this until you have counted to number 10.

Repeat this counting process by starting with the number 9 and going backward to 1. If at any time during this exercise you lose track of a number, start over from the beginning. As you get better, you can increase the base number to 20, or even 30.

Find Your Happy Place Meditation

Sit comfortably and enjoy five minutes of mindful breathing meditation. Now, imagine you are in a peaceful, beautiful place. It can be a place you've been to, or a place you imagine. Whichever, it is very relaxing and soothing. There's no place you'd rather be.

Look around and experience the sights, sounds and colors around you. Notice how your body feels. Allow yourself to become lost in the beauty of your special place. Take all the time you want.

Notice the sense of peace and calm flooding through your body. When you are ready to leave, take a deep breath and open your eyes. You are now ready to face the challenges of your day.

Chapter 4: Mindful Meditation and the Brain

What Scientists are Learning

Until recently, scientists regarded the brain as mass inside our head. Nothing more and nothing less. It was believed that as adults, we are stuck with the neurology cards we were handed at birth for life. That theory has been proven to be false.

With the use of MRIs, neuroscientists have discovered that: a) we have far more control over our brain than previously thought; b) changes in the brain can be quantified, and c) we can change our thinking to improve our lives.

Chapter 5: Why is Awareness So Important?

Greater self-awareness is at the root of mindful meditation.

Much of our inner life lies below the surface, in the vast region of the subconscious. Our lives are governed by patterns set long ago, sometimes at birth. Our mind can be conditioned in many ways. With the help of mindful meditation, we can recognize a pattern of behavior. It's this awareness that allows us to take that first proactive step toward change.

Eliminating Bad Habits With Mindful Meditation

Mindful meditation brings awareness to this destructive type of self-labeling. It lets us view our thoughts non-judgmentally, apart from ourselves and begin to challenge the truth of any label. Behavior is never set in stone. When you challenge your labels, your behavior will change accordingly.

Using mindfulness, the next time you think of yourself as a bad person, you can stop the thought as it happens. Tell yourself, "Here's that silly label again. This is not who I am."

Mindful meditation allows us to recognize the labels we have accepted. With non-judgmental awareness, we can act in ways that diminish the power of labels.

Chapter 6: Mindful Meditation and Work

Mindful meditation is proven to help reduce stress and deal more effectively with change. And the office is a place where you'll find an abundance of both. Work is where you spend most of your time. If you're stressed out at work, this will affect you psychologically, physically, and impact other areas of your life.

Negativity Ruins Professional Life

The ability to control our responses to others is critical at the office. It's a bad idea to tell the boss off, and annoying your co-workers will only add more stress.

When we are aware and in control of our emotions, we are more able to suppress improper, aggressive responses and reactions. When we are in a problem-solving environment, such as work, it is crucial that our brain remains in an open, resilient mode instead of getting bogged down by negative thoughts and feelings.

Embracing Mindfulness For Better Performance

The good news is that many companies are starting to embrace mindfulness and are organizing on-site meditation programs. If your company doesn't have a program, you can still engage in mindful meditation. Short breathing meditations can be done at a desk and can quickly shift your mind to problem-solving stance instead of panic mode.

How To Practice Mindfulness At Work

Many of us don't listen carefully when we are upset. We are too busy preparing our reply. To really listen and hear what is being said, look into the speaker's eyes. Keep your mind focused on what is being said instead of thinking about how you will answer. It's all too common to talk without thinking and say things that we wish we could take back.

Chapter 7: Mindful Meditation and Relationships

Relationships are confusing and can bring out the worse behavior in anyone. Whether it's your family, a date, friend or co-workers, even good relationships present constant challenges.

How Mindful Meditation Nurtures Healthy Relationships

When we are in conflict with another person, especially a loved one, we are more likely to be talking and expressing our grievances instead of listening. We've already discussed the importance of mindful listening. It's the basis of any important relationship.

When you engage in a more mindful conversation, you eliminate many misunderstandings that can damage a relationship. Mindfulness is always non-judgmental. It helps us clear our mind so that we are able to listen without judging and embrace kindness to avoid confrontations.

Chapter 8: Mindful Meditation and Happiness

We all want to be happy. It's our natural condition. It used to be believed that our capacity for happiness is innate. We're born with a certain happiness threshold, and that was the baseline. There is evidence that circumstances may raise or lower that baseline, but that it will eventually return to the original level.

Gratitude Equals Happiness

Before we discuss meditation, it is important to point out that our basic level of happiness consists not of some single circumstance. Instead, it's the small, daily joys that elevate our mood ... a beautiful sunset, lunch with a friend, a good book all have the power to raise our spirits.

We need to become aware of these mood elevators and consciously pursue them. It's important to savor those moments and give gratitude for the experience. Happy people make a deliberate decision to pursue these moments.

Mindful Meditation Proven To Cultivate Happiness

Dr. Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin, has spent considerable time studying Tibetan monks. More recently, he followed employees taking part in an eight-week mindful meditation program. The results of Dr. Davidson's findings show that, in all cases, a program of mindful meditation can elevate a person's mood.

How To Meditate For Happiness

To let go of those negative feelings, do the following forgiveness meditation:

Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and practice mindful breathing for 5 minutes. Allow thoughts, words or images of someone you can't forgive yourself to surface in your mind. It can be someone you've hurt, and you have regretted your actions ever since.

Let your mind wander to how much you cared for this person, and the pain that you caused. If you are remorseful, feel those emotions.

Accept what happened in the past. It is done. It is time to forgive yourself. In your mind, think, “I forgive myself. I have made mistakes and caused pain, either deliberately or not. I am not the same person. I have learned much from life. It is time for me to move on. I forgive myself. I am ready to let joy back into my heart.”

Feel free to use words appropriate to your situation. This exercise will lift the burden from your heart and allow feeling of happiness in its place.

If you feel bitter toward another person who has caused you pain, do the same exercise, but change the word “I” to “You.”

Chapter 9: Successful People Who Meditate

Many successful people are crediting meditation as part of their regime to grow values, character and improve their overall health. For them, it's become a winning lifestyle that provides the tools for a higher-quality life.

1. Padmasree Warrior
2. Rupert Murdoch
3. Tony Schwartz
4. Bill Ford
5. Oprah Winfrey
6. Larry Brilliant
7. Ray Dalio
8. Russell Simmons
9. Robert Stiller
10. Arianna Huffington

Chapter 10: Great Mindful Meditation Apps

It's somewhat ironic that while modern technology can cause a lot of stress, there are downloadable mindful meditation apps that can help guide you through some soothing mindful meditations. You can choose from a variety of specific topics, such as sleep, anxiety, depression, stress, etc. or participate in an entire mindful meditation program.

There are hundreds of meditation apps, so let's look at some of the most popular ones.

1. Headspace
2. Mindfulness Daily
3. Smiling App
4. Insight Timer
5. Aura
6. Omvana
7. Stop, Breathe & Think
8. Calm
9. The Mindful App

Chapter 11

The Benefits of Mindful Meditation

As you learn to understand yourself, you will develop a better understanding of why you act in certain ways. Some habits may be helpful, but other automatic behavior may be holding you back. That's what makes mindful meditation so effective. Greater awareness leads to opening doors in many areas of your life.

Let's take a look at some of the proven benefits of mindful meditation.

1. Mindful Meditation Can Reduce Pain
2. Mindful Meditation Can Improve Sexual Experience
3. Mindful Meditation Can Improve Mood
4. Mindful Meditation Enhances Empathy
5. Mindful Meditation Can Enhance Focus
6. Mindful Meditation Reduces Stress
7. Mindful Meditation And Resilience
8. Mindful Meditation Boosts Creativity

Chapter 12: Create a Mindful Life

Mindful meditation can change your life. You learn that the thoughts flowing through your mind are not reality. What you do about those thoughts is reality.

In addition to meditation, you can use mindful strategies to enjoy mindfulness throughout the day. Mindfulness doesn't stop at meditation. It's a lifestyle. It puts mindful meditation into daily action.