

MINDFULNESS 101

by Rebecca Ogle, LCSW

DEFINING MINDFULNESS

"Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally." - Jon Kabat-Zinn

- Mindfulness is a practice as well as a state of mind, with origins in Buddhism and Eastern cultures.
- Meditation is a form of mindfulness practice.
- "Mindfulness" and "meditation" are often used interchangeably.

MINDFULNESS IS NOT...

- **Relaxation** - Sometimes relaxation occurs organically during mindfulness, but not always. The point is not to relax, but to become *aware*.
- **A contest** - There are no grades or awards, and no one is counting how many times your mind wanders.



HOW DO YOU PRACTICE MINDFULNESS?

Step 1: Focus your attention on an anchor; your breath, your surroundings, etc. Observe how the anchor changes (or not) from moment to moment.

Step 2: Notice when your attention has wandered from the anchor.

Step 3: Gently bring your attention back to the anchor.

Step 4: Repeat (and repeat, and repeat...)

MINDFUL PERSPECTIVE

- **Acceptance** - Mindfulness encourages us to make peace with reality just as it is, instead of wishing it were otherwise, or thinking it "should be" different.
- **Non-judgment** - Practitioners of mindfulness strive for an attitude of non-judgment, in which they neutrally observe instead of label.
- **Non-striving** - Trying very hard to be mindful is often counterproductive to mindfulness. Instead, practice not trying hard, and letting go of errors.

MINDFUL POSTURES

- **Seated chair:** Sit with your feet flat on the floor, your back straight but not rigid, your hands at your sides or in your lap, eyes closed or cast downward.
- **Seated floor:** Sit cross-legged, perhaps on a pillow, with your back straight but not rigid, your hands on your knees, and your eyes closed or cast downward.
- **Lying down:** Lay down on a yoga mat or bed. You may choose to place a pillow under your knees for lower back support. Lay your arms at your sides or on your stomach. Close your eyes.

Rebecca Ogle is a licensed therapist who provides teletherapy to folks with anxiety, depression, self-esteem and relationship problems in the state of Illinois and internationally.
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T: 773-819-0494
E: rebeccaogle@therapysecure.com
Website: <https://rebeccaogle.blog>