

Top Ten Tips for Practicing Mindfulness



A commonly accepted definition of mindfulness comes from John Kabat-Zinn: “*Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.*” Mindfulness is a mind and body practice that centers on the connections between the brain, mind, body and behavior.

1// Mindfulness is a wellness tool. Mindfulness supports a healthy life just like brushing and flossing teeth, getting a good night’s sleep, staying hydrated, and adding physical movement to the day. Mindfulness practice is considered safe for healthy individuals but is not recommended to use in place of health care. As mindfulness practice can offer complementary benefits, always discuss your habits with your health care provider.

2// Mindfulness is a skill that should be practiced and enjoyed. The purpose of practicing mindfulness exercises on a regular basis is not necessarily to get better at it. The goal of the practice is to make mindfulness a habit or

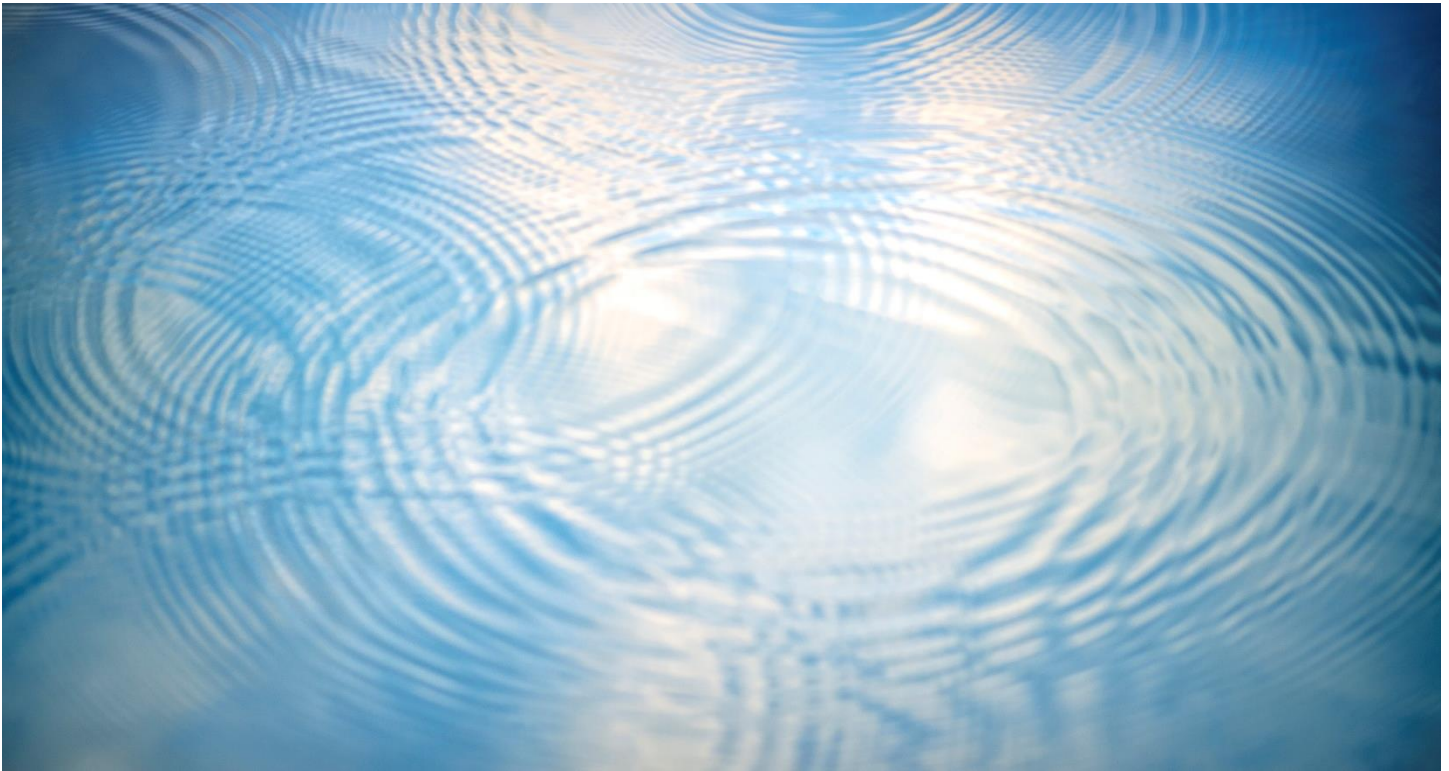
routine as part of a healthy lifestyle. Like riding a bicycle, playing a musical instrument, enjoying a sport, or learning a new language, mindfulness is an activity to learn, practice, and enjoy.

3// Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere. Although it might be easier to be in a quiet, undisturbed space, especially when first learning mindfulness, with practice, it can be used as a tool in the middle of commotion and disorder. The value of learning how to focus on the breath can be used to take a very small pause in the middle of a chaotic day.

4// Mindfulness is beneficial to healthy living. Over the years, researched benefits of mindfulness include, decreased stress and anxiety; improved attention, memory, and the ability to focus; reduced chronic pain; strengthened immune system; and relationship satisfaction.

5// The benefits of mindfulness can be subtle. Sometimes it’s challenging to identify benefits as it takes time to build resilience, but with practice, mindfulness will help throughout the day and not just during the time of formal mindfulness practices. Mindfulness “can help you be less reactive and more responsive to events in your life.” (Mayo Clinic)





6// Just because it's a simple concept doesn't mean it's easy. Sometimes described as “Monkey Mind”, there is often a constant chattering in the mind, as our brains run through “to do” lists, judgements of what is happening, or running through past thoughts over and over. During a mindfulness practice, it is not uncommon that the brain will become distracted. Part of the mindfulness exercise is for the practitioner to nonjudgmentally return to the present moment.

7// Just because it's a simple concept doesn't mean it's not amazing and powerful! After using a mindfulness practice for better sleep for a few months, I will never forget the split second my brain thought “oh my goodness, this works”! I had been sleeping better but I

knew it was working when I stayed calm after accidentally spilling milk all over the floor.

8// Find a good fit for you. A good fit might look different on different days of the week or during different situations. In general, participants of mindfulness training “are taught to develop mindfulness skills through a range of formal and informal mindfulness practices, including, amongst others, the body scan, mindfulness of the breath, body, sounds and thoughts, mindful movement and mindfulness of everyday activities” (link Cavanagh et.al, 2014, p.119). Other popular ways to practice mindfulness include: imagery exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindful eating.

9// Mindfulness resources are available for purchase as well as for free. Some communities might offer mindfulness classes through community centers or libraries or fitness centers or the local Extension office. If you do not have access to local lessons, try searching for book sat the library or using online resources.

10// Mindfulness is for everyone and it can be part of any lifestyle. Different mindfulness practices and activities can be used with all ages, in different settings, and for different reasons. How can mindfulness benefit you?

References and Links:
go.osu.edu/top10mindfulness