

How to Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally—or in other words, knowing what you are doing while you are doing it. – Jon Kabat-Zinn



Mindfulness helps overcome the natural tendencies of the mind to be distracted and underlines the importance of training the mind.

- Tendency of the mind to be distracted – focusing on the past or the future.
- Tendency of the mind to focus predominantly on the negative or worst-case scenarios – known as “negativity bias.”

These tendencies are linked to the survival instinct and self-protection of the human being. It is a priority to be free from threat, danger, and unpleasant experiences. However, our innate propensity to proliferate our negative thinking while filtering out the positive can lead to increased anxiety, stress, and health detriments.

Regular practice of mindfulness has been linked to many benefits, including:

- Reduced anxiety
- Prevention and treatment of depression
- Increased self-worth
- Improved concentration
- Improved cognition
- Reduced implicit bias

Mindfulness is not “zoning out” or dulling the mind. It is also not complex nor esoteric. Anyone can practice and reap the benefits of mindfulness. In fact, it’s as simple as A, B, C, D!

Anatomy – Find a position where you feel grounded and centered, relaxed and alert. Downward gaze or close your eyes.

Breath – Use your breath as an anchor for your focus. Observe the breath coming in and going out; without trying to control it, observe it.

Counting – Breathe in and out and while counting. Breathe in and out and count 1, breathe in and out and count 2. Count all the way up to 10, and then work yourself back down from 10 to 1.

Distractions – As distractions occur, celebrate that moment of awareness. Gently release that distraction and return your attention to your breath and simply start counting again.

Find more resources from Caterpillar's Employee Assistance Program at EAP.cat.com.