




Mindfulness Worksheet

What is mindfulness?

mind·ful·ness
/ˈmɪn(d)f(ə)lnəs/ 

noun

1. the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something.
"their mindfulness of the wider cinematic tradition"
2. a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

Mindfulness is deliberately pay attention to whatever you are doing at the current moment.

You can read the next few pages mindfully or with a mind not fully focused and aware that you are reading an article but not retaining the information. We can do everything mindfully except sleep.



What are mindfulness practices?

Formal mindfulness can be meditation which is the practice of sustaining attention on body, breath or sensations, or whatever arises in each moment. Or, informal mindfulness is the application of mindful attention in everyday life.

Creating daily mindfulness practices brings awareness to our daily actions particularly during difficult times. We become more aware of our:

- **thoughts** "I must be stupid to do this",
- **feelings**: sadness, anger etc.,
- **behavior**: aggression, withdrawing, doing a breathing exercise
- **physiological changes**: fast breathing, weight in stomach, pins and needles, nausea.

These are the big four, we will be coming back to thoughts, feelings, behavior, physiological changes time and again. A range of mindfulness exercises address the different areas.

Using mindfulness practices will assist with observing what is happening during those 4 difficult emotions. Journaling is a good way to express the emotions however the goal is more to become familiar with how the mind works and its habit patterns.



What are the benefits of mindfulness?

Understanding mindfulness allows you to better understand how your brain works and more specifically creating mindfulness practices provides:

1. **Stability of mind** – creating a clear alert clear space in your mind rather than at the extremes of being dull or agitated.
2. **Flexibility of mind** – the ability to shift your mind to whatever object you choose, rather than having it bounce haphazardly between any number of issues like open tabs on the internet.
3. **Self-awareness** – being aware of what you are thinking about and understanding the typical patterns of your mind.
4. **Acting** rather than **reacting** – Becoming more proactive and less reactive, e.g. when you are upset and choosing how you will act.

It's not called a practice for nothing. Like any other form of therapy real change will require hard work and commitment, in this case a commitment to maintain your practices six days per week.

How does it work?

While most of what we achieve is by "doing", mindfulness achieves its ends by simply by observing. It allows us to see our thoughts and emotions for what they are, thoughts we are having at the moment and emotions we are currently experiencing.

Thoughts like "I must be stupid" are subtle and we generally believe them out of habit. By being mindful of thoughts like this we gradually get the idea that they *are* just thoughts that we are having and there is no need to believe them uncritically. Similarly, with a feeling like "anger" we start to realize that it is a feeling that is currently strong within us but no more than that, we currently have anger, but it doesn't define us and it will pass.