

Mindfulness tips and techniques

Here are some tips that you might find helpful when you start practising mindfulness.

Be more aware of the world around you

Take a minute to look around the room you're in, and really notice what's around you – the shape, colour and texture of each object.

You can also do this outside, for example when you're on a walk. Try to use all five senses

For example smell a flower, observing the different shades on the leaves and then feeling a petal between your fingertips. Take time to observe the shapes, colours and textures

Be more aware of your thoughts

Try to take a step back from your thoughts, as if you're watching them come and go in your mind. This can help you feel less controlled by them.

Be more aware of your body

Pay more attention to how your body interacts with the space you're in, how things look, feel, sound and smell in the world around you rather than your thoughts about them.

Two Exercises to Try

Ground Yourself

While sitting down, try place your feet firmly on the ground an even distance apart.

Think about the weight of them. Think about their place on the floor and how they feel flat on the ground. Are they heavy or light?

Focus on your surroundings

If you're walking upstairs, run your hands along the bannister and pay attention to how it feels.

Notice the feeling of the wood or metal and the temperature and texture. Notice the feeling of any small grains or pieces of flaking paint.

Try Mindfulness when you're feeling stressed

When you are feeling very anxious or stressed, try implementing any of these short exercises:

- Take a short break to practice a three-minute breathing exercise where you use your breath as your anchor. Make sure to take a deep inhalation for three seconds, followed by a deep exhalation for three seconds.

- Put aside a minute and practice mindful thinking. Sit in a quiet place, and try to step away from your feelings, observing your thoughts and behaviours. Do not judge your behaviour; your intention is only to observe it.

These two techniques can help you during periods of acute stress, but a more powerful device would be to foster a mindfulness habit now (when you are not stressed) so that you are less vulnerable in the future.