



Intro to Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

1. Noun.

- intentional practices or exercises aimed towards cultivating access to focus, non-judgemental "presence", nervous system homeostasis, peace and clarity

2. Verb.

- a psychological state (or way-of-living) of non-judgemental awareness of the world around you and within you
- paying attention on purpose
- *Presence or Flow State*

In languages where mindfulness originates the word *mind* is usually inseparable from the word *heart*. This is a critical component to integrating "mindfulness" into other cultures. In the west we often try to *think* or *analyze* our way out of problems and miss the "heartful" component. Holistic wellbeing requires a sense of heartfulness; living with compassion and self-acceptance.

How do I start?

By simply checking in with yourself daily, hourly, as often as you remember, monitoring stress and agitation patterns

Some obvious signs of this include:

- Jaw clenching, cursing, unproductive thought patterns (negative self talk, negative judgements of others, rumination, etc.), holding on to your breath or shallow/chest breathing, holding shoulders shrugged, anger

As we become more aware of unhealthy stress signs and patterns it is crucial to next "Reboot" or re-center your Nervous System and mindstate. How do we do this? *Mindfulness Training!* As you practice intentional exercises of mindfulness, this state becomes more readily accessible when needed day to day. Find more exercises on www.thefacilitydenver.com/mindfulness.

Mindfulness “Reboot” Exercise

Parasympathetic-stimulation Breathing (the parasympathetic nervous system is the "rest and digest" part, which counteracts the "fight or flight" aspects of our nervous system).

- 1) Set your mind with the intention to get more "parasympathetic", or relaxed
- 2) Inhale through your nose
- 3) Use belly/diaphragm and lower rib cage for each inhalation (neck, jaw, forehead and shoulders relatively relaxed).
**Try placing one hand on the abdomen and one hand on the chest, or pressing into the sides of your ribcage to feel these areas expand/retract through each breath cycle
- 4) As breathing mechanics come, focus on exhaling slightly longer than you inhale. (ex: inhale for 4 count, exhale for 6 count)

** As you notice your breathing rate slowing, this is a sign that your body is relaxing!

Parasympathetic-stimulation Breathing can be done from many different positions:

- Lying on back with knees bent (or pillow under knees)
- Seated; try to be upright in posture without being too rigid
- Anywhere else in life; as you become more aware of unhealthy stress tendencies and mental habits, this simple exercise will allow you to bring more strength and balance to your biochemistry and life experiences day-to-day.

While stress will never be gone from our lives, it is imperative that we learn to regulate how our body responds to each potential stressor we face.

Important to know as you continue this journey...

The mind naturally wanders and creates crazy ideas, scenarios, images etc. This is often experienced during mindfulness exercises, this is okay and “**NORMAL**”.

Mindfulness/meditation is so powerful because it allows us to see and *improve* our mind's patterns instead of these patterns happening apart from our awareness (which likely is the case if we have never tried this before). We each have the opportunity to **let ourselves Be** just as we are! What is important is not that you reach a certain state during meditation, but rather commitment with a sense of open-mind and heartfulness, non-judgmentally coming back to breath/presence as often as needed.

Want to learn more and get directed experience with Mindfulness? [Read about Neil's experience and offerings at The Facility Denver](#), and book your [Integrated Massage + Mindfulness Session](#) today.

Bonus: [Check out Axon-Mind-Body on YouTube!](#)