

# Try This 4-Week Plan to Practice Mindfulness

Want to tap into the benefits of mindfulness? It takes practice. But you can do it, even if you're busy. This mindfulness practice only takes 9 minutes a day. Here's what you'll need to know:

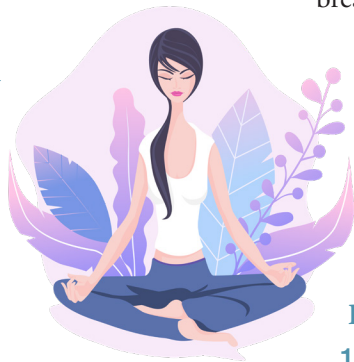
**Where?** A quiet place where you can be alone without distractions

**When?** Morning, afternoon, and before bed.

**How long?** 3 minutes per session.

## Be Mindful – Week 1

1. Set a timer for 3 minutes.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Pay attention to all the thoughts in your head about work, family, and other things. Notice how you're feeling.
4. Focus on your breath as you inhale and exhale.



## Be Mindful – Week 2

1. Set a timer for 3 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. After a minute, think about your day, what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.
4. After two minutes, focus on your breathing.
5. Breathe in deeply through your nose. Hold the breath for 5 seconds. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 7 seconds.

## Be Mindful – Week 3

1. Set a timer for 3 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Sit in silence, and try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. Place a hand on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds. Exhale through your mouth for 7 seconds. Repeat.
4. Focus your thoughts on your breathing, and feel the rise and fall of your stomach.
5. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Think about what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.

## Be Mindful – Week 4

1. Set a timer for 3 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Sit in silence, and try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds. Exhale through your mouth for 7 seconds.
4. Place a hand on your stomach. Now breathe in through your mouth, and exhale through your nose.
5. Focus your thoughts on your breath. Feel the rise and fall of your stomach. And notice how it's different.
6. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Think about what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.

## 8 Health Benefits of Mindfulness



Try this out. Stop and pay attention to your thoughts for just a minute.

Is your mind racing from one thought to the next? That's typical. Mindfulness can help you learn to focus your thoughts and be more aware of what's really happening. It takes consistent effort. But anyone can learn to practice mindfulness. It doesn't cost anything. And you can tap into the benefits of mindfulness in just a few minutes a day.

Research shows mindfulness can help.<sup>3</sup>

1. Improve mood
2. Lower blood pressure
3. Reduce depression and anxiety
4. Improve sleep
5. Reduce stress
6. Lower heart rate
7. Control breathing
8. Reduce pain

3 guided mindfulness practices  
<https://tinyurl.com/ffxjl3iw>

When you learn to practice mindfulness, it changes the way you think and feel. You can use mindfulness to improve your mood, develop healthy habits, and be healthier.

How to practice mindfulness at work  
<https://tinyurl.com/zv49wasj>

## References

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2. Van Dam, N.T., et al. (2018). Mind the hype: A critical evaluation and prescriptive agenda for research on mindfulness and meditation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(1): 36-61. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3fwt9rjc>
3. Harvard University. (2016). Mindfulness: Not just for stress reduction. Harvard Health Publishing. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2i5aa1fr>

