



# Be Mindful Daily

## CHALLENGE

Create a daily mindfulness practice

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Be Mindful Daily.”
2. Create a plan to practice medication daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When stress reached an all-time high for Rachael Kable, it felt like everything was falling apart.

She was worried and anxious. She didn't sleep well. Even driving made her heart race.

Going to work pretending everything was fine, only made things worse.

“It felt like no matter what I did, I was constantly pushing myself up a never-ending mountain,” says Rachael.

When someone suggested she try meditation, she didn't think it would help.

“How could being mindful really change someone's life?” she thought.

But she decided to stick with it and make mindfulness a regular part of her day.

When she wakes up in the morning, she spends the first few minutes in bed. But she's not thinking about a big to-do list, errands, or work. Instead she focuses on being present. She notices sounds, the view from a window, and pays attention to how she feels.

At first, it seemed like a waste of time. But spending a few minutes each morning being mindful changed everything.

“For me, it has truly become a way of living and thinking,” says Rachael, author of the book *The Mindful Kind*. “Rather than waking up too early and immediately feeling bombarded by my to-do lists, I wake up feeling refreshed and energized.”

Only have a few minutes a day? Great. Tap into the power of mindfulness to improve your life and your health. Take the month-long health challenge to Be Mindful Daily.

### Mindful Matters:

How much do you know about mindfulness? Take this quiz to find out.



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1.   Paying attention to the texture and taste of food and how you feel when you're eating is an example of mindfulness.
2.   Multi-tasking is a great way to get more things done and maximize your time.
3.   You typically don't think about any one thing for more than 3 to 4 seconds at a time, without being interrupted by other thoughts.
4.   Practicing mindfulness can improve the area of the brain used for memory and learning.
5.   A daily meditation or mindfulness habit can help you sleep better, reduce stress, prevent heart disease, and lower blood pressure.

How did you do? Mindfulness isn't just a feel-good activity. Research shows a daily mindfulness practice can actually help you feel better and make healthier choices.<sup>1</sup> What about multi-tasking? There's nothing wrong with being efficient. But trying to do too many things at once can increase stress, impair learning, and make you less productive. Take a deep breath. Mindfulness is a skill you can learn.

Answers: 1. True. 2. False. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True.

## Let's Get Clear About Mindfulness

Even though mindfulness is gaining popularity, it's still a bit of a misunderstood activity.

- Do you sit cross-legged on a pillow and hum quietly to yourself? You don't have to.
- When you meditate, do you try and solve all your problems? No.
- Is it just for people who have an interest in spirituality? No.
- Does it require long periods of silence for hours a day? No.
- If you do it once to try it out, will it work? It takes practice.

5 ways  
mindfulness  
is good for your  
health  
<https://tinyurl.com/1mi8i74w>

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and environment.<sup>2</sup> But instead of trying to problem-solve, mindfulness is simply being aware of what's happening in the present moment.

# 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:

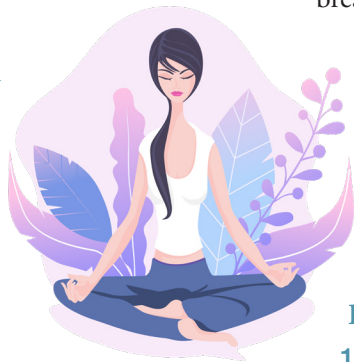
**Where?** A quiet place where you can be alone without distractions

**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

1. Kang, Y., et al. (2017). Dispositional mindfulness predicts adaptive responses to health messages and increases exercise motivation. *Mindfulness*, 8:387-397. From: <https://tinyurl.com/43o56f8r>
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>





# Be Mindful Daily

## CHALLENGE

Create a daily mindfulness practice

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days practice mindfulness.
3. Use the calendar to record the actions and choices you make to create a daily mindfulness practice.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you take steps to Be Mindful Daily. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health. .

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	
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\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced mindfulness  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

