



# Mindfulness: How to Become “Mindful”

## What is Mindfulness?

*Mindfulness is being in a mental state where you intentionally focus your conscious awareness on the present moment and become very much in that moment. Mindfulness can be general, and can also be applied to specific activities, too, like breathing, moving, and thinking.*

## Why should we care about behind “mindful?”

*Being mindful is really important to taking care of yourself and others. It gives you a sense of peace and calm, and that can free up your mind in ways that allows you to handle stressors better in your life, which can improve things like mood, relationships, job performance, parenting, and overall personal functioning.*

## What can I do to be more mindful?

*Try our Mindful Trio! You can practice mindfulness through breathing and relaxation exercises, through some specific types of physical movement, and through changing your ways of thinking about things in your life. There are many other ways, too. We share just a few here. See the next page for one set of lessons in each of these three areas that you can access from your phone or a computer. THESE ARE FOR TEENS AND ADULTS.*

*All three can be done at any time throughout any day, especially when you are realizing that your stress and worry is high and you need to reset yourself.*

- 1) Mindful breathing and relaxation—This involves controlling your breathing and relaxing your mind and body to feel better. The QR code will take you to a quick couple minute exercise.
- 2) Mindful movement—This gives you a better physical outlet for stress and gets you ready for the day. The QR code will take you to an exercise that takes about 10 minutes.

3) Mindful thinking--This practice focuses on making connections between our thoughts, behaviors, and feelings in order to identify and change negative thinking patterns. We all sometimes struggle with negative thinking patterns, or what we are calling “thinking errors.” It happens to all of us, but these exercises help improve it! See below for a list of the 10 most common thinking errors.

*These are 10 common errors in how we think about things, people, and situations in our lives:*

- *“I Can’t”*: automatically concluding that you can’t do something, which makes you give up before you try
- *Catastrophizing*: you expect disaster and spend a lot of energy worrying
- *All-or-Nothing*: you see life in extremes which leads to upset and irritation
- *Zooming in on the negative*: you get stuck thinking over and over about disappointing or embarrassing experiences
- *“I should, you should”*: you hold yourself and others to a set of rigid and unreasonable rules
- *Fortune-telling*: you jump to the conclusion that you know what will happen even when you don’t
- *Mind-reading*: you jump to conclusions about what others are thinking and the thought is always critical
- *Blaming*: you blame yourself or others for everything that happens
- *“It’s not fair”*: you get upset that you’ve been unjustly treated, even though fairness is unrealistic
- *Feelings as facts*: you interpret feelings as truth about the world around you

*How many of these do you do?*

*Working in all of these areas will more in touch with your feelings and your actions and help you to feel more and successful and in control in all of these areas of your life.*

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*Please email if you have any questions about these 10 sets of lessons!*

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