

Take time for yourself despite a busy schedule

Does it feel that you are busy every moment of the day? That as you are nearing the end of your To Do list, ten more items suddenly appear? That you can't find a single moment to even catch your breath?

Taking that moment may be exactly what you need.

What it means to be mindful

Webster's Dictionary defines mindfulness as "the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis."¹ Or said more simply, a state of awareness. Taking a few minutes or even seconds in your day can help.²

5 simple things you can do

Practicing mindfulness can have positive health benefits. By focusing your attention on the world around you, mindful exercises can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Reducing negative thinking can improve your mood while also making you more productive.³

1. **Breathe.** Find a quiet spot to sit comfortably and focus on your breathing. Feel each breath as it passes in and out. If your mind wanders, redirect your thoughts to your breath.²
2. **Pay attention.** Notice items around you, looking at familiar items with fresh eyes. Truly listen to others with an aim to understand, not respond. Allow yourself to experience sights, sounds, and tastes in a new way.³
3. **Be still.** When you feel overwhelmed or out of control, sit or stand as you wish but remain still for a few moments.²
4. **Take the time.** For some, setting aside even 10-15 minutes a day feels like an impossible task. And that's okay. Get in the habit of taking mini breaks throughout your day. When your mind is going a mile a minute, stop and concentrate on inhaling for five second and exhaling for five seconds. Repeat five times.²
5. **Reflect.** Some days are better than others, but every day has a moment or two for which we can be grateful. End each day by looking back and focusing on the moments that matter.^{2,3}

Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.

Sources

1. Definition of mindfulness. Merriam-Webster (N.D.). Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mindfulness>
 2. Embracing Meditation and Mindfulness in a Busy World (05/2020). Cleveland Clinic. Retrieved from: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/embracing-meditation-and-mindfulness-in-a-busy-world/>
 3. Use mindfulness to improve well-being (06/2020). Mayo Clinic. Retrieved from: <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/use-mindfulness-to-improve-well-being>
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