

# How Can You Start Practicing Mindfulness?



... a fun, friendly competition promoting physical activity and personal wellness

With mindfulness practice, learning how to be mindful is only the beginning. The bulk of the mindfulness practice is about familiarizing yourself with what it feels like to be mindful, and then getting better at “remembering” to maintain mindful awareness.

Health Update Week 2

Almost any activity can be turned into a mindfulness practice if it focuses you and grounds you in the present moment. Mindfulness practices involve the following basic components:

1. **Direct involvement** with one of your five senses: smell, touch, taste, hearing or sight.
2. **An “anchor”** - the object of attention during a mindfulness practice. For example, breathing can be a mindfulness practice. You should involve your breath and you should feel the air entering and exiting your nostrils, and even the sensation of your lungs expanding and contracting. The exact awareness doesn't matter as long as you can keep focused on it.
3. **Returning to the anchor** – This is where the power of mindfulness practice comes from. Chances are you will only be able to remain focused on your anchor for a few seconds—at first. As you become more practiced it will take moments before becoming distracted.

A helpful metaphor to keep in mind is that your distractions are like clouds passing in the sky—notice them without judgment and then let them pass without a trace. Finding the time to maintain a “mindfulness practice” can be one of many difficulties in today's fast-paced world, but keep in mind that even ten minutes of practice a day adds up!

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1381>

Experiment with creating your own mindfulness practices throughout the day. However, having a ritualized and structured practice can be beneficial.

So, next time you are feeling anxious, stressed, or uncomfortable, **take a moment** to check in with yourself and be more mindful!

## Mindful Behaviors

- I am able to observe my thoughts and feelings without getting lost in them.
- I am aware of my body and physical sensations throughout the day. I can easily find words to describe my feelings.
- I can easily describe different sensations that I am feeling.
- I notice when my mind is wandering, and return it to the present.
- I am aware of the thoughts and emotions influencing my actions and behaviors.
- I can accept unpleasant experiences without judging them.
- I can be aware of my thoughts and emotions without judging them to be good or bad.
- I can notice my thoughts and emotions without having to react to them.
- I can pause before reacting in difficult or stressful situations.

\*Adapted from the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006)

Watch this [animation](#) and you'll understand why practicing mindfulness is one of the single most powerful things you can do for your wellbeing.



Heidi Copeland  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
UF/IFAS Leon County Extension  
hbc@ufl.edu  
850-606-5229