

Mindfulness

By Danielle Ross

Mindfulness, what exactly is it? Mindfulness is the practice of being present in your mind at that moment. It is taking the time to check in with yourself, process what is going on, and then letting it all go so that you can be truly be present with yourself and those around you. Mindfulness is being aware of yourself, your surroundings, and others. It can include breathing exercises, meditation, and visualization. Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere. It can be done while on a walk, sitting down, or even while eating. Anyone can practice mindfulness. It is great for kids, college students, adults, and even grandparents.

Practicing mindfulness has many [benefits](#). Mindfulness is known to reduce stress and anxiety by altering your emotions and mood. When you become more relaxed you increase your brain function, focus, clarity, sleep and immunity. Your blood pressure and heart rate also decrease when you are in a relaxed state. Practicing mindfulness can decrease your frequency of experiencing depression. Mindfulness alters our mood by allowing us to focus on the positive side of things, increasing relaxation, creating a sense of connection to everything around us, and a sense of purpose. Increasing immunity gives us a better chance at fighting illnesses whether acute or chronic.

There are many ways to [practice mindfulness](#). It can really be done anywhere at any time in the day. You can do it while brushing your teeth, driving, taking a bath, and even between classes. There is no time limit. It can be a quick minute or even 15 minutes. You can sit, stand, lay down, or be in motion. There are endless ways to practice mindfulness. Below is an example of a breathing exercise and a visualization exercise.

[Breathing Exercise](#)

Belly Breathing- Take a nice deep breathe in and slowly let it out. Notice what part of your body is rising and falling. Focus on your belly filling up with air first, then your chest as you inhale. As you exhale, focus on you belly falling first, then your chest. Sometimes it helps to place your hand on your belly to create more awareness. As you continue to do this, feel your body start to relax and release all that stress. Remembering to check back in on your breathing. Continue to do this breathing exercise until you feel a sense of calmness.

[Visualization Exercise](#)

Blue Light Technique- Visualize yourself surrounded by a blue light. As you breathe in, imagine your body breathing in the blue light. As you exhale, imagine all your stress coming out as black smoke. Visualize the black smoke evaporate into the surrounding blue light. Continue to do this until you feel a sense of relaxation and peace of mind.

I challenge you to take 5 minutes out of your day and practice mindfulness. You will be amazed at the difference it can make in your life. There are a ton of apps and resources out there

to help guide you through mindfulness. Below are just a few apps and resources out there. Remember to check out all of Drake Wellness' social media sites for more information.

Mindfulness and Meditation apps:

- Smiling Mind app (free)
- My Life free app (free)
- Koru Mindfulness app
- Calm app
- Breathwork app
- Headspace app only \$10 for students

Sources for Mindfulness and Meditation:

- Little book of Mindfulness
- www.positivepsychology.com
- www.mindful.org
- Developing Mindfulness in College Students through Movement Based Courses: Effects on Self-Regulatory Self-Efficacy, Mood, Stress, and Sleep Quality
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2879280/>
- A mindfulness-based intervention to increase resilience to stress in university students (the Mindful Student Study): a pragmatic randomized controlled trial
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5813792/>
- Impact of a Yoga and Meditation Intervention on Students' Stress and Anxiety Levels
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6630857/>
- Facing the fear of failure: An explorative qualitative study of client experiences in a mindfulness-based stress reduction program for university students with academic evaluation anxiety <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4545197/>