

*All great things have their origin in that which is small. – Lao Tzu*

While mindfulness is a skill that can be cultivated with time and practice, incorporating basic mindfulness exercises into your daily life does not require extensive time, training or resources. Try one or more of the following exercises to experience mindfulness for the first time, or incorporate these and others mindful moments into your every-day routine.

**Wake Up Well.** Before rising, take a few moments to notice how you feel when you wake up. Notice any sensations, thoughts and feelings, without judging them as good or bad.

**Eat Mindfully.** Set some time aside for each meal or snack. Choose a variety of healthy, nutritious foods. Notice the taste and smell of your food. Chew slowly and take pleasure in the experience of eating.

**Pay Attention.** The next time you meet someone, listen closely to his or her words. Repeat and remember the person's name. Aim to develop a habit of understanding others and delaying your own judgments and criticisms.

**Take Breaks.** Take short breaks throughout the day for walking or stretching. Observe how your body feels before and after. Be conscious of your energy level.

**Notice Five Things.** When you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts or feelings, pause for a moment. Look around, and notice five things you can see. Listen carefully, and notice five things you can hear. Notice five things you can feel in contact with your body. Use this simple exercise to center yourself, and connect with your environment.

**Take Ten Breaths.** Throughout the day, pause for a moment and take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible, until the lungs are completely empty, and breathing in using your diaphragm. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying and your ribcage falling as you breathe out. Notice the rising and falling of your abdomen. Notice what thoughts are passing through your mind. Notice what feelings are passing through your body. Observe those thoughts and feelings without judging them as good or bad, and without trying to change them, avoid them, or hold onto them. Simply observe them. Notice what it's like to observe those thoughts and feelings with an attitude of acceptance.

