

Mindfulness Meditation

What is it

- Meditation is a structured practice of concentrated focus upon a sound, object, visualization, the breath, or movement in order to increase awareness of the present moment. It is paying attention on purpose, to the present non-judgmentally. It also reduces stress, promotes relaxation, and enhances inner balance and peace of mind.

How to do it

- It is helpful to set a special time aside each day to practice meditation. You can start with 5 to 10 minutes a day, increasing to 20 minutes over time. It can also be helpful to practice at the same time and place each day.

Posture

- Seat – find a solid, grounded, stable position on a chair or cushion
 - let body relax in the position, not too tight and not too loose
- Feet – flat on the floor (grounded)
- Hands – hands on thighs, palms down (grounded)
- Back – as straight as possible
- Chest – soft/open
- Ears – above shoulders
- Chin – ever so slightly in towards the chest
- Jaw – relaxed
- Mouth – slightly open, like “ah”
- Tongue – softly touching roof of mouth
- Eyes – open and gazing downward, using soft focus

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Breath

- Notice your breath going in and out. Not forcing or changing it — just noticing it.
- Increase the length of the out breath. Each time you breathe out, allow yourself to let go and relax.
- Occasionally check your body posture, and then go back to paying attention to your breath.

Thoughts

- It's natural that thoughts will arise, and your mind will wander. That's okay.
- It may be a thought, an image, or an emotion — just label it all "thinking" and bring your attention back to the "In and Out" of the breath.
- Be very kind to yourself when you notice your mind wandering. Gently say to yourself "thinking" and bring your attention back to the breath.

Variation

WALKING MEDITATION

- Walk slowly, hands in front or by sides as you would usually walk.
- Pay attention to your body; feel a sense of ease.
- With each step, feel the sensations of lifting your foot, moving it forward then placing it on the ground.
- Notice when the mind has wandered away, label it "thinking" and bring your attention back to your body and to moving each foot.
- You can say "lifting, swinging, placing" to yourself to help stay focused on your body.
- Paying attention to the in breath and out breath also helps you stay focused on your body in the present moment.



Anxiety Module

Calm Mind

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This module contains additional cognitive behavioural strategies and exercises that may be helpful for symptoms of generalized anxiety, social anxiety, panic attacks, phobias, post traumatic stress and obsessive compulsive behaviours.

Use the flow charts to help you choose the handouts that correspond to your patient's diagnosis or needs.