

Everyday Mindfulness Micro-Practices

During a recent virtual session, mindfulness expert Elli Weisbaum shared some tips for integrating mindfulness into our everyday lives. Here are a few micro-practices you can embed into your day – whether it is at home or at work.

Remember that mindfulness practice is like mental fitness – it takes time and effort!

Focused Attention Practice



Focused attention (FA) practice aims to build stability and clarity of mind. It involves choosing a focal point, such as your breath, to place your attention. Then, when you notice your attention has naturally wandered, you bring your attention back to the focal point. Bringing your attention back to the breath can be thought of as the workout or bicep curl of focused attention!

Our mind can be thought of like a snow globe that we are constantly shaking with all our thoughts and worries. It is important to take time to stop shaking the snow globe, which can allow for the snow to settle and us to find some clarity. To do this, consider adding short pauses in your day, following just 3-5 full in and out breaths. This can help stabilize the “snow globe” of your mind. This can also allow you to disconnect and reconnect more fully to your surroundings.

Open Awareness



Open Awareness (OA) practice develops the capacity to stay present and observe whatever is happening in the moment. During the practice, you begin with focused attention, then open your mind to observe what thoughts, physical sensations or emotions are present. The aim is to remain an observer of what is arising and subsiding, rather than becoming “lost” or “attached” to certain thoughts. OA practices often use a metaphor for the mind, such as imagining the mind as an open sky, your thoughts as clouds drifting through the sky, and yourself as an observer looking up at the sky.

Minute to Arrive



Groups can apply focused attention to support becoming present and focused, which can lead to more effective communication and collaboration. This can be a useful tool when starting a meeting at work, or whenever you begin a new task (e.g. answering emails). Pause before you begin a meeting or group activity and invite everyone to take 1-minute to focus attention on their breath, allowing the body and mind to settle and focus.

Weather check-in



This is a great way to connect with your team and colleagues at your next huddle or meeting. Go around and invite each colleague to share what their “weather” forecast is for the day (e.g. sunshine in the morning, with a chance of rain in the late afternoon). This is an accessible way to allow people to share their thoughts/feelings without having to explain them in detail. Consider framing this activity as confidential to that particular time and space, this way if someone does not wish to talk about their weather further, they know it is still ok to participate. Try this exercise with family members at home!

On-the-go integration



Mindfulness practice doesn't have to take up a lot of time. Try to practice a mindful moment (like the focused attention practice above) during a daily activity like washing your hands, checking an email or brushing your teeth.

Developed in collaboration with Elli Weisbaum
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