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Calming the anxious Mind

This workbook belongs to: _____



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The aim of this workbook is to help you to:

- Understand what mindfulness is.
- Understand ways of practising mindfulness.
- Know of ways to use mindfulness practices to help calm anxiety.



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What is mindfulness

“When your attention moves into the Now, there is an alertness. It is as if you are waking up from a dream, the dream of thought, the dream of past and future. Such clarity, such simplicity. No room for problem-making. Just this moment as it is.” - Eckhart Tolle





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Mindfulness = Awareness of mind, body and spirit.

Living in the now.

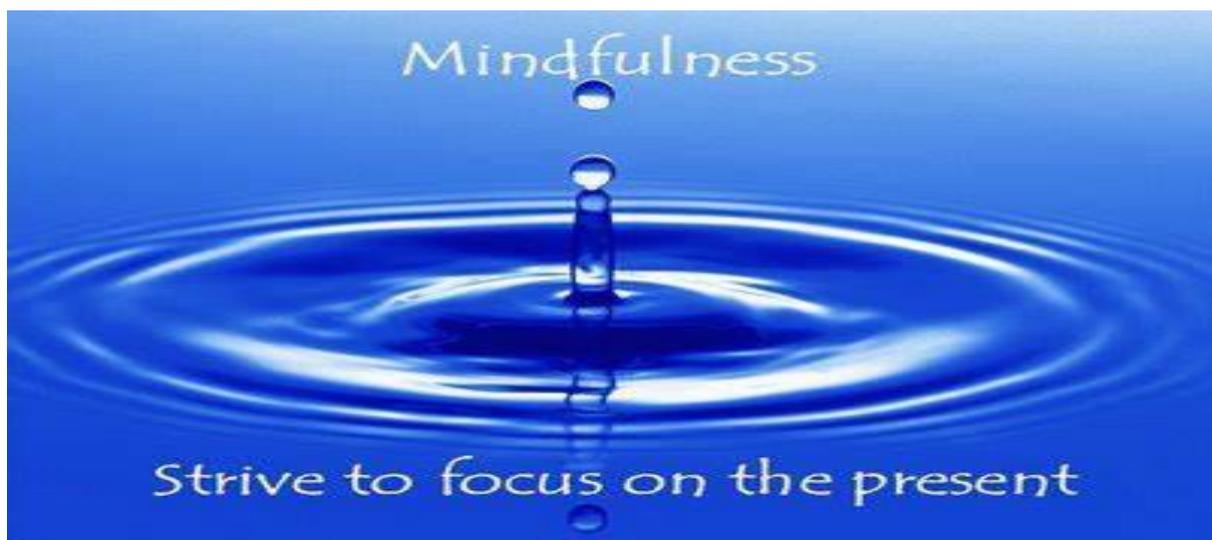
Focussing on what you are doing.

Noticing everything.

Feeling, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and noticing these sensations.

Listening and acknowledging your thoughts both good and bad without judgement.

It is done on purpose.





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How does it work?

4 Factors:

1. Mindfulness is about paying attention.
2. It is about paying attention in the present moment.
3. It is done on purpose. There is intentionality.
4. It is done in a non-judgmental fashion.



Try it activity. Grab a biscuit or a sweet. Whilst eating it notice the taste and texture. Write in below:

What does it taste like? (sweet, salty, smooth, rough):

how you are feeling and thinking.

During this activity were you in the past, present or future?

Can you pay attention to a past moment or a future moment?

Write down your answer here: _____



We

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only remember past moments and only think or plan about future moments. You can only live in the present. In the NOW!

So, mindfulness is about really living, living in the present, not worrying about the past and the future!

What are the Benefits of Mindfulness?

To fully understand the benefits of mindfulness we need to also understand anxiety and what happens to our brains and our bodies when we are in an anxious state.

What makes you anxious?

Why does it make you anxious?

What drives anxiety?





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UNCONTROLLED F.E.A.R DRIVES ANXIETY



Why do we need fear? What are benefits of fear?

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THE 3 Fs:



Think about the symptoms and reactions of Fear. What does someone look like and do when they are in fear?

Here are some symptoms, add more if you can think of anything else.

eyes wide open

fight

faster heart beat

sweat

laugh

quicker breathing

cry

jump

shake

shout

freeze

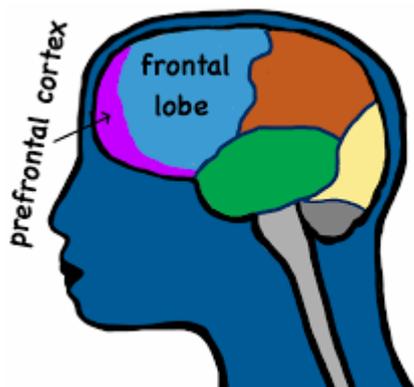
swear

scream

run

Now think about the symptoms and reactions of Excitement. Cross off any you see on the symptoms of fear from list above.

Fear comes from the prefrontal cortex region of our brains and is processed by the Amygdala.



Fear is the best understood of all emotions, neurologically speaking.

And the Amygdala, an almond-shaped structure in the limbic system, is considered to be the seat of fear in the brain (as well as other emotions). But fear is processed differently than other emotions, bypassing the sensory cortex on its way to the amygdala.

This explains why emotional responses are often unconscious—and why phobias and anxiety may be caused by conditioned responses to stimuli that the sufferer may not consciously fear.

And here is the surprise:

SO DOES EXCITEMENT!

The brain does not know the difference between fear and excitement!

We can change how we feel about fear and change others perception of what they are seeing by using:



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Feeling Excited And Relaxed (F.E.A.R) technique



Using the F.E.A.R Technique:

Next time you meet someone new and you are nervous or fearful and showing fear symptoms, when meeting them say: "Hello, I am so excited to meet you."

This technique tells the person you are meeting that what they are seeing is excitement and not fear.

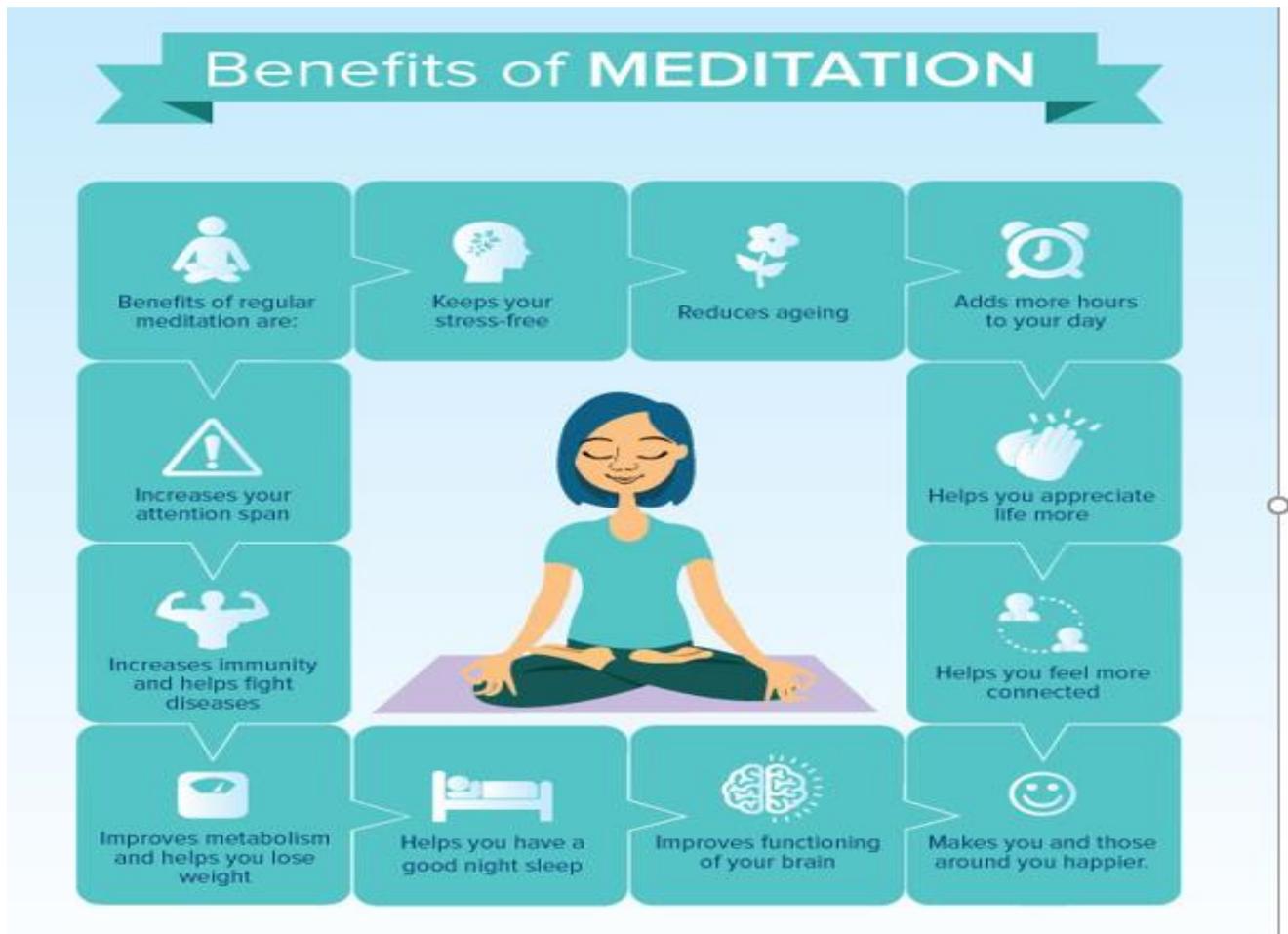
And also by saying this out loud you are telling your brain the same message and changing the response and emotion from fear to excitement.





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How mindfulness meditation works and the benefits:



Mindfulness meditation doesn't only change our mindset and perspective, it can actually change the shape of our brains.

Generalized neuroimaging meditation studies found that 8 weeks of mindfulness meditation also changes our brains, rewiring them towards more positive thoughts and emotions.



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For starters, meditation allows us to move from high-frequency brain waves to a lower frequency, which activates (and, potentially even more importantly, deactivates) certain areas of the brain. For example, it can decrease neurological connections to the medial prefrontal cortex, or the “me center,” diminishing traits such as fear, stress, and anxiety.

In turn, meditation can also build new pathways to the parts of the brain responsible for traits like focus and decision-making.

And that’s not all: mindfulness meditation can actually change the shape of the brain as well, a process known as neuroplasticity.

Research shows that gray matter — the area of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, planning, and problem-solving — as well as the cortical thickness — responsible for learning and memory — both increase with regular meditation practice.

Alternatively, the amygdala, which regulates how we feel stress, fear, and anxiety, decreases in size.

Why practice Mindfulness? What are the Benefits? (list the benefits below)



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8 meditation techniques that cultivate mindfulness

Here's a breakdown of eight of the more popular mindfulness techniques. Some will sound intriguing, while others may not be your cup of tea. See which ones work best for you.

- 1. Focused Attention:** Likely the most common form of meditation, this technique uses the breath to anchor the mind and maintain awareness. Focus your attention on the breath — specifically the rise and fall of the chest — and return to the breath whenever you get distracted or notice your mind starting to wander.
- 2. Body Scan:** This technique, which uses meditation to connect with the body, involves scanning your body from head to toe and being aware of any discomfort, sensations, or aches that exist (which could be indicators of stress and anxiety).
- 3. Noting:** This is a mindfulness technique in which you “note” a particular thought or feeling when you become distracted during meditation. The practice of noting helps to create space and learn more about our habits, tendencies, and conditioning.
- 4. Loving Kindness:** Instead of focusing on the breath, this technique involves focusing on the image of different people: people we know, people we don't; people we like, people we don't. We direct well-wishes and goodwill first to ourselves, and then, as a ripple



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effect, to others, which helps us let go of unhappy feelings we may be experiencing.

5. Skillful Compassion: Similar to the loving kindness meditation technique, this one involves focusing on a person you know or love and paying attention to the sensations arising from the heart. It's aptly named because it's thought to be helpful in opening our hearts and minds for the benefit of other people, which in turn fosters a feeling of happiness in our own mind.

6. Visualization: This technique uses visualization, to focus on a person or something more abstract, to hold attention. The idea here is that the familiar image will help create and maintain a relaxed focus.

7. Resting Awareness: Rather than focusing on the breath or a visualization, this technique involves letting the mind rest; thoughts may enter, but instead of distracting you and pulling you away from the present moment, they simply leave.

8. Reflection: For this technique, ask yourself a question, for example, "What are you most grateful for?" (Note that asking yourself a question using the second person — you — will discourage the intellectual mind from trying to answer it rationally.) Be aware of the feelings, not the thoughts, that arise when you focus on the question.





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Mindfulness Techniques and Practices:

Formal Mindfulness- meditation

Types of Breathing:

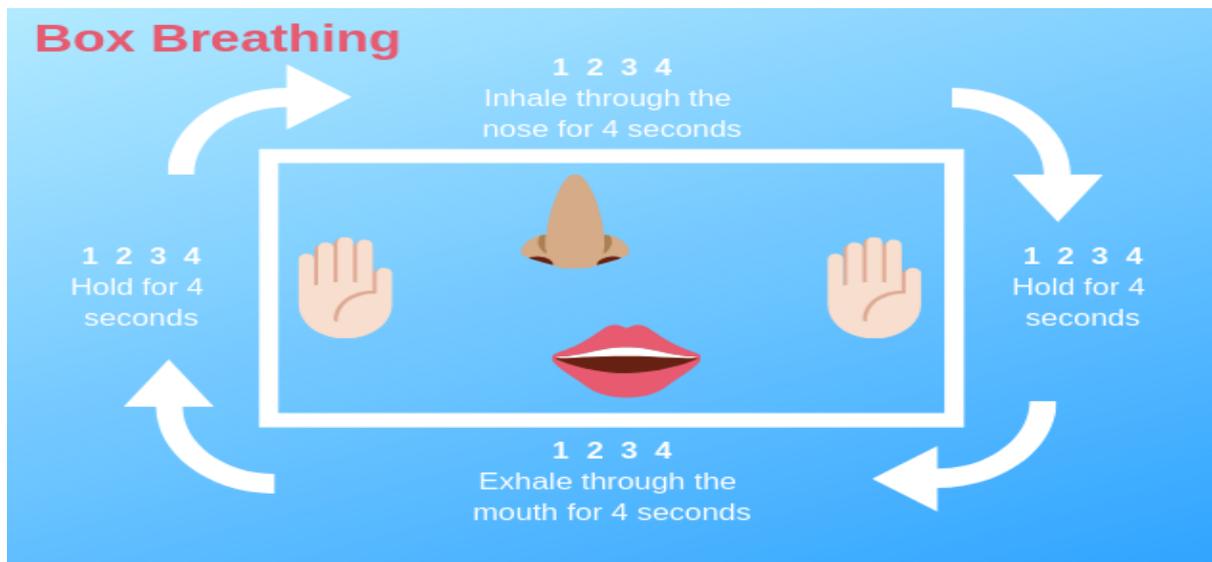
1. **Standard:** Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.



2. **Alternative Nostril:** Hold the left nostril down, breathe in through your right nostril and breathe out through your mouth. Do the same to your right nostril and keep on alternating.



3.Box breathing: Breathe through your nose, hold, then breathe out through your mouth. **Warning!!!** Please do not attempt this method if you have lung conditions.



How long should I meditate for?

The best guide might be this old Zen saying: *"You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day—unless you're too busy. Then you should sit for an hour."*



Tip: Break down 20 minutes:10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes at night or try several 1 minute sessions throughout the day.



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How to do a 1-minute meditation

Here's how you can experience the benefits of meditation in just 60 seconds!

1. Find a comfortable seated position, whether you are in your home, office, outdoors, or even sitting in your parked car.
2. Then, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Breath control in a 1-minute meditation is quite beneficial because of the immediate cognitive connection, which creates a calmer state of mind.
3. After you've found yourself in a comfortable position, silently
focus on counting your breaths or doing a body scan.



Allowing yourself to deeply drop into your mind and body for one whole minute can help with your decision-making, focus, communication, and energy levels.



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Mindfulness colouring- try to colour in the picture below and find the hidden objects. Use as many bright colours as you can. The focus on the task will help calm down your mind.





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Some further help with mindfulness meditation:

| Apps on phone or online | Books |
|---|---|
| <p>Headspace: Calm Stop, Breathe & Think Buddhify Sattva Aura Breathe Insight Timer Synctuition Omvana Simple Habit</p> <p>*Note: You do not have to pay for these. There are free options available by accepting ads between sessions and some offer free trials (Remember to cancel the Direct Debit before the trial ends), and some sessions are available free on Youtube.)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Meditation Is Not What You Think:</u> Mindfulness and Why It Is So Important By Jon Kabat-Zinn2. <u>The Mindful Day:</u> Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy from Morning to Evening By Laurie J. Cameron3. <u>Be Mindful & Stress Less</u> By Gina M. Biegel4. <u>The Little Book of Mindfulness:</u> 10 minutes a day to less stress, more peace By Patrizia Collard5. <u>The Little Book of Meditations</u> By Gilly Pickup |





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Mindfulness: Post Assessment and Evaluation

Please complete below and hand back to your journey guide.

| Post Assessment | Name: | Date: |
|---|-------|--------|
| I have improved my overall understanding of mindfulness. | | yes/no |
| I generally feel that I understand my anxiety better. | | yes/no |
| I feel that I will be able to try some of the mindfulness practices and techniques. | | yes/no |
| I have found this helpful. | | yes/no |

| Evaluation |
|--|
| Please describe your experience using the workbook: |
| What actions will you take as a result of the information in the workbook? |
| What did you feel was relevant and what was not? |
| How can this workbook be improved? |