



Mind Bites

Mindful hobbies



Hobbies focus your mind on the moment, helping to relax you, reduce stress and create positive feelings.

This replicates mindfulness in a way that can be incorporated into your daily life.

A personal story



Salena Pass
Environment Officer
Environment Agency

I have several hobbies, but my favourite is crochet. It allows me to reduce my anxiety and focus.

Breaking the cycle of my chattering brain allows me to step back from my anxiety and reassess the situation. I can also express my creativity and individualism.

Any hobby will do, just enjoy it.

Share your story by emailing:
MeadenFamily18@gmail.com

Tips on mindful hobbies



Choose a hobby that you enjoy. Consider what you want to achieve.



Persevere a new hobby can be challenging but learning something new can give you a sense of achievement.



Focus on the task and push away intrusive thoughts. Replicating the meditative style of mindfulness.



Environment is important. The feeling of the sun, a comfortable chair or a lovely view are antidotes to stress.



Relax there is no rush. Take deep breaths and slow your actions. This helps to release tensed muscles and slows your heart beat.

Useful links

- [Mind - Improve your mental wellbeing](#)
- [Headspace - How to find a hobby](#)
- [TED Talks - When you want to start a new hobby](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful running



Using mindfulness whilst running can help you to manage stress, increase your self-esteem and help you become more productive.

By slowing your racing mind, you have more space to think clearly.

So, drop those thoughts, watch those steps and enjoy your run.

A personal story



Dipa Patel
Defence Infrastructure
Organisation

A few years ago, I took up running as a way to help me relieve stress.

Taking in the fresh air, surrounding scenery, the sounds of cars driving past and focusing on my foot movements has really helped me to feel relaxed.

I would definitely recommend running with some mindfulness!

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Tips on mindful running



Concentrate on your breathing

Build up a rhythm, think about whether you are breathing to fast or slow.



Feel the fresh air

Take in the weather, feel the sun, rain or wind on your skin.



Listen to the sounds around you

Take in the sound of each foot step the traffic passing by or the sound of the wind.



Notice how your body is feeling

Do you feel any aches or pains? Think about your pace - do you need to slow down or have you got energy to speed up?



Look at your surroundings

What is in front of you? Look at the colours of trees, leaves, cars driving past and people walking by.

Useful links

- [Headspace – running meditation](#)
- [How to turn your run into mindfulness](#)
- [Help and support](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful sleeping



Getting to sleep can be hard.

Humming has the same calming effect on the nervous system as deep breathing. Also, making your face muscles more smooth and relaxed.

A personal story



Linda Locker
Quality Assurance
Assistant
Public Health
England

I've found the Headspace App really useful. I don't use it on a regular basis but over the last three weeks I've had problems sleeping and found it difficult to "switch off."

I use the 20-minute sleep course. Sometimes I fall asleep but at the end of it my head is clear, and I get to sleep quickly.

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Tips for sleeping



Ideal room temperature – between 15.5 – 19.4 Celsius. If it is too cold or hot it may wake you in the night.



Notepad nearby – instead of lying awake thinking about tomorrow, write down your thoughts in a journal.



Go herbal – a herbal tea can help you fall sleep, drinks such as lavender, chamomile and mint.



Calming eats – some foods such as berries, yogurts and bananas can help you relax.



Seek support – invest in a pillow and mattress to support you. It can help you to sleep better.

Useful resources

- [Mindfulness sleep exercises](#)
- [Headspace – Meditation for sleep](#)
- Relax melodies: Sleep Sounds app

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful Workout



You can practice mindfulness anywhere, at anytime, completely at your own discretion.

Research has shown that mindful workouts can reduce stress, anxiety, depression and improve your overall health.

A personal story



Mark Sutton
Animal Health Officer
APHA (Animal and
Plant Health Agency)

As a member of the gym, I focussed on the wrong thing. I was too hard on myself and I wanted quick results.

A mindful workout has really benefited me. I became fitter whilst becoming more aware of myself and my body, increased my energy levels, reduced my stress levels and felt more relaxed.

Share your story by emailing:
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Mindful Workout tips



Focus: To practice mindful exercise, don't listen to your music, use your phone, read, or watch TV. Be fully present to where you are at that moment.



Be self-aware: Monitor your breathing. Use it to challenge yourself more or go easy on yourself.



Don't multitask: Your workout will suffer if you do and mindfulness is not possible when you multitask.



Understand yourself: Don't be hard on yourself about where you want to be or how you were in the past. You can't develop if you don't start from your current position.



Allow yourself time: Don't rush. Spend time training both your body and your mind. Slow progress is better than no progress!

Useful links

- [NHS and Mindfulness](#)
- [Headspace - Mindful workout](#)
- [Mindful – Mindful exercise](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful break facts

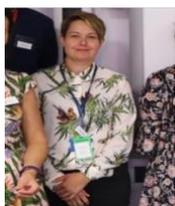


A **15 second** break taken every **10 minutes** reduces fatigue by **50%**.

A **2-minute break** isn't long, but it's long enough to:

- **Stand and stretch** – stretching drives oxygen to your brain and wakes you up
- **Rest your eyes** – A **20 second** break to gaze 20 feet away can relieve eye strain.

A personal story



Clair Hudson
Customer Services
Team Leader
HMRC

Sometimes you get so absorbed into a piece of work that you forget to take a break.

I've found that when my eyes feel heavy and tired, I walk away from my desk, get a glass of water, have a stretch and take a deep breath.

This helps me get through the day and keeps me awake.

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MeadenFamily18@gmail.com

Take a mindful break to:



Go for a walk - Smell the air, listen to the sounds and take in your surroundings. Moving your body will help boost your mood.



Have a break date – Grab a coffee and have a chat with a colleague or friend. Talking can help relieve stress.



Have an energy snack – Berries, leafy greens and nuts are proven to help your brain function better. Appreciate the flavours, textures and colours as you eat!



Try office yoga – [Breathing exercises](#) can go a long way in 5 minutes!



Try a hand or neck massage - Help relieve workplace tension and give yourself a [massage](#).

Useful links

- [Mindful breathing – 3-minute exercise](#)
- [20 ways to take a mindful break](#)
- [Help and support](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful cleaning



As the days start to get longer and warmer, many of us think about giving our homes a spring clean.

But have you thought about the same for your mind?

Everyday household chores such as washing up are a great opportunity to practise mindfulness without taking extra time out of your day.

A personal story



Emma Cooper
Department for
Education

I feel a lot more relaxed when I have a clean and tidy house.

I find sorting out my wardrobes and cupboards very satisfying and love the smell of fresh laundry!

I am definitely going to try out some of the ideas for practising mindfulness while I am doing the washing up and other jobs around the house.

Share your story by emailing:
MeadenFamily18@gmail.com

Tips to clean mindfully



Washing up - notice the temperature of the water on your hands and the scent of the washing up liquid. You could also focus on what you see out the window.



Folding laundry - focus on how the fabric feels and smells. Notice the different colours and patterns of the clothes. Notice how you fold the laundry.



Cleaning surfaces - focus on the texture of the cloth in your hand. If your sweeping the floor, notice the repetitive action and the sound that it makes on the floor.



Watering plants - pay attention to each part of the flower, noticing the colours and textures. You could also focus on whether more or less water is needed.



Declutter – your home to relieve stress.

Useful links

- Mind – [about mindfulness](#)
- Headspace - [Spring clean your mind](#)
- Mindful Minutes - [Mindful cleaning practice](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).





Mind Bites

Mindful cooking



Cooking provides a wonderful opportunity for you to be present, mindful and aware.

Train your mind to become mindful by focusing on the meal you are preparing, the sights, sounds, flavours and aromas.

A personal story



**Mo Rahman,
Customer Service
Supporting Officer,
Department for
Education**

I started cooking as a form of mindfulness.

When I cook I don't want to be disturbed and concentrate on what I am doing.

I used to think I was a perfectionist and had obsessive compulsive behaviour (OCD) but I soon realised that I used cooking as a way to relieve stress.

Share your mindfulness story by emailing: MeadenFamily18@gmail.com

Tips on cooking mindfully



Think about what you are going to eat and what you are putting into your body



Take in the sensation of touch, when you prepare food, how does it feel on your hand?



Take in the noise, for example the sizzle of onions or the sound of boiling water



Take in the smell of different aromas and flavours, for example the smell of onions heating in a frying pan



Notice the changing colours and textures of food



Be a 100% present, when your mind wanders go back to the smell, touch, noise and texture of food.

Useful links

- Headspace – [Mastering the art of mindful cooking](#)
- Ted Talk – [All it takes is 10 mindful minutes](#)
- Mindful recipes – [Recipes for compassion](#)





Mind Bites

Mindful eating facts



Did you know it takes **20 minutes** for the brain to receive a message when we are full?

During this time, it is easy to overeat.

Mindful eating encourages us to **engage the senses** and truly pay attention to what we eat by **removing distractions**.

A personal story



Helen Smith
Quality Assurance
Officer, Public Health
England

Having been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) I often suffered with pain after eating.

Clinical trials have shown that mindfulness can work as effectively as tablets, at easing IBS symptoms.

When I can, I apply the principles of mindful eating and with regular yoga practise, my symptoms have improved.

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Mindful eating tips



Jot down your food plan for the week to help focus your intentions. Explore cooking with new ingredients. Taking in the new tastes, textures and flavours of these foods.



Pause and reflect halfway through a meal, think about how full you are feeling, do you need to finish the meal?



Have a seat, limit your distractions and focus on every bite.



Engage your senses, take your time to notice the taste, texture and smell of the food. What do you enjoy about it?



Try eating with your non-dominant hand or using a different utensil, such as chopsticks rather than a fork.

Useful links

- [Headspace – Mindful eating](#)
- [Help and support](#)
- [Raisin exercise](#)

Give us feedback [here](#).