

Mindful Work

How to practice

You don't need much to do this course, other than making a commitment to frequent daily practice of many mindful moments. However, it will be useful to establish the following:

1. Find a quiet, uncluttered place to practice at home, where you can be undisturbed.
2. Try to find a time slot of at least 5 minutes, at the same time each day, in the early morning and again in the evening. In these times you can do your breathing or body scan exercises, using the mp3s if useful.
3. Try to do this every day.
4. Find triggers (such as every time you get a drink, go to the loo, finish an email etc) when you pause for a few moments, breathe slowly and mindfully, and recentre yourself. Do this right through the day.

Getting ready to practice

For many of the exercises in this course, you will adopt a sitting posture. You don't need to get into a full lotus and pretend to be a little Buddha. Just sit, upright, either on a cushion or on an upright chair.

Here are the key instructions:

1. Sit in an upright position
2. Stay fully alert, but relaxed, with focused, curious attention
3. Stay in the now – dwell neither in the past or the future, just let the present unfold with freshness
4. Do not comment on or judge whatever arises – nothing is intrinsically good or bad
5. If you realise your mind has wandered, simply bring it back and carry on

Our busy minds

How much of our life are we fully present to what's happening now? The present is the only time we have in which to live – the past has gone into memory, and the

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future is still fantasy, yet if we're honest we will observe that much of our present is occupied by thinking about past or future, with their associated regrets or worries.

Mindfulness helps us to re-focus and reclaim the present; it is only in the always-unfolding gap between past and future, that we can re-discover calm and freedom.

This sounds incredibly simple, and it is. Mindfulness practice takes no effort, in fact with too much effort you can get caught up in achieving and failing. This where everyone starts, so make no comment, and don't start telling yourself you can't do it. You will.

The only issue is that we have developed the habit of not being present. So to address that, we need to re-train our brains.

The simple exercises in this course help you to develop the ability to stay present, stay focused and stay awake.

When we start these exercises, the first experience many people have is that the mind is busy, distracted and full of worries. Correct. If you notice that, you've made your first big insight. It will change; you just need to keep up the mind-training, just like going to the gym to get fit.