

# Mindful Work

## What you need 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. A quiet place to practice at home. Find or make a special place, where you know you won't get distracted. Ideally it should be calm, quiet, clutter free, and have a window nearby. You'll need an upright chair, or a cushion to sit on.
2. Get the support of your family or the people you live with, so that when you practice, they know not to disturb you.
3. Morning practice. Try to find a time slot of at least 10 minutes, at the same time each day, normally better in the early morning. Daily practice is best, and at least 5 days a week is a recommended minimum (to change habits, the brain needs this repeated practice).
4. Find triggers (see separate note) so that you practice at least once an hour – so that you clock up 1000 mindful moments in the 2 month course.

## 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

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## 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 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.