

# Basic Mindfulness Exercise

***Mindfulness is all about noticing and focussing your attention.***

A basic mindfulness exercise begins with

- simply sitting down,
  - relaxing and
  - breathing deeply.
1. Close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing, following the breath in and out.
  2. After a short time, focus your attention on your body, one part at a time, noticing any sensations of cold, hot, tight, sore or anything you can identify.
  3. After a few minutes of attention on your body, start listening to the sounds of the room, without judging or criticizing or even thinking about them. Just listen.
  4. Slowly open your eyes and look around as if seeing for the first time. Stop and rest your eyes on an object for half a minute. Examine it without saying things about it in your mind. Repeat this with another object, and then another, while *still maintaining an awareness of your body and your breathing*. Continue in this state of mindfulness until you are ready to get up.

**When you are sensing your body and your breath and the immediate environment, you are more fully "in the moment."** These mindfulness exercises put your mind in a very receptive state while removing mental distractions that prevent clear thinking. They leave you ready to work mentally. Do a mindfulness exercise before any important mental task and you'll find that you have more focus and concentration.

## **Check: Do you experience any blocks to being mindful and calming down?**

A quick mindfulness exercise you can test right now: When you are in the middle of any task and you feel a little stress, stop. Take a moment to carefully watch yourself so you can identify what is bothering you. Find everything you can. Are you expecting something bad to happen? Is an argument from this morning still going on just below the surface of your consciousness? Are you worried about something? Is some part of your body in pain? Make a note of everything you find.

Now deal with these thieves-of-concentration one by one. Make the phone call that is on your mind, take an aspirin if you need to, and apologize to whomever you were fighting with. Put things that are on your mind on the list for tomorrow (in writing). Even if all you can do is acknowledge that there is nothing you can do right now, do that. After doing these quick mindfulness exercises, you'll feel less stressed, and you'll be able to concentrate more effectively on the tasks at hand. Try it