



Building Blocks of Resilience

Mindfulness Part 2: Techniques and Practices

THE BASICS OF A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Mindfulness techniques are practices that cultivate awareness, so you receive the most from every moment. Quiet breathing and centering, focused breathing, poses-standing or seated, guided meditations and mindful eating are all common mindfulness practices.

Mindfulness practices can be performed anywhere, anytime, and don't require special equipment. They are for all ages, including children as young as 2, and can be performed for any duration of time. Practices are highly scalable.

BREATHING:

You take your breath with you everywhere. Breathing practices are a great place to start. Here are a few to try with your family or by yourself.

Hand Breathing- use your hand to remind you to take deep breaths.

- Using your hand, trace up the side of one finger as you breathe in and trace down the other side as you breathe out. Repeat for all fingers on both hands. You may notice you feel better or can focus more. Show this to a child or other family members and breathe.

Belly Breathing- we tend to be shallow breathers characterized by breathing from our chest spaces rather than from our bellies and focusing on inhales when both the inhale and exhale are important.

- Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest so you can feel the movement of your body as you breath.
- Think of your breath as three points in each direction:

As you inhale: feel the belly fill with air, then your ribs lift, and last your chest widens.

As you exhale: feel the chest deflate, the ribs drop, and the belly pull in toward your back.

Centering Breathing- practice this when you need a moment to shift your attention to the present. This is best practiced when sitting. Make sure you feel comfortable and relax your body, especially your face and shoulders.

Close your eyes. Notice:

- Your breath without changing it.
- The length and sound of the inhale and the exhale.
- The feel of the breath entering and leaving the nose.
- The feel of the breath on your upper lip. Continue to focus on your breath for several minutes.
- If you notice your mind wandering, invite it back by attending to the sound or feel of the breath.
- If thoughts come into your mind, observe them like a slideshow, allowing them to pass through without judgment or holding.
- If you notice yourself distracted by any given thought, turn your awareness back to the breath, and the thought should pass.

When you are ready to end the practice, slowly allow your eyes to drift open or slowly blink the eyes. *Notice how you feel.*

MOVEMENT AND POSES:

Movement and poses are a great way to focus attention on the present moment. Physical practices are particularly helpful for children because they like to move and find sitting still challenging.

Balancing- tree pose can be done at a wall if you need more support, or in the middle of a room.

- Shift your weight to one foot, bend the knee of the other leg while keeping the big toe on the ground.
- Move the knee out to the side. If this is too easy, slowly move the foot of the bent leg up onto the calf of the standing leg.
- Hold the pose and breathe while balancing. To increase the challenge, lift arms to reach to the sky. Repeat on the other leg.



BODY SCAN MEDITATION:

This is a great way to relax parts of your body and train your mind to stay in the present moment. It can be practiced sitting or lying down. It is also a great strategy to quiet the mind as you prepare for sleep.

- Lie down or sit on a comfortable surface. Close your eyes.
- Notice where your body touches the surface and allow your body to become relaxed, feeling the weight of the body supported.
- Take your feet, hands, and face and tighten them and then allow all to relax, the feet to fall out to the sides, the palms to open to the sky, the jaws to separate, and the space between the eyes to soften.
- Beginning with the toes, relax each body part until you get to the top of your head by:
 - Drawing awareness to the body part.
 - Giving permission for it to relax.
 - Feeling it become heavier.
- By the time you focus on the top of your head, the body should be much more relaxed than when you start the practice. If lying down, you may fall asleep before you reach the top of your head.

ADDITIONAL MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

Practical Resources.

Dariotis, J.K. (2021). Building Blocks of Resilience Mindfulness Part 1: Benefits and Misconceptions. http://familyresiliency.illinois.edu/system/files/Mindfulness%20Part%201%20Benefits%20and%20Misconceptions_0.pdf

Mindful Movement for Children and Families: Mission2Move YouTube Channel (freely accessible videos): <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAwF49Qputqca5JtN3fnhFg>

Book on mindful movement practices for children:

Habib, S. (2020). MOVE: An interactive adventure for students to learn how to calm their bodies and minds. Cincinnati, OH: Mission2Move.org. [Available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/MOVE-interactive-adventure-students-bodies/dp/B08KFYXPT2>]

Free guided meditations from the Center for Healthy Minds (approximately 30 minutes each):

https://www.youtube.com/c/HealthyMindsInnovations/videos?view=2&live_view=502

EVIDENCE BASED RESOURCES (SELECTED)

Dariotis, J.K., & Fishbein, D. (in press). *Mindful Yoga (MY) for Grade School Students*. In Tyler Renshaw (Ed.), *Using Mindfulness to Promote Mental Health in Schools*, Oxford University Press.

Dariotis, J. K., Mirabal-Beltran, R., Cluxton-Keller, F., Gould, L. F., Greenberg, M. T., & Mendelson, T. (2016). A qualitative evaluation of student learning and skills use in a school-based mindfulness and yoga program. *Mindfulness*, 7(1), 76-89.

Mendelson, T., Greenberg, M.T., Dariotis, J.K., Feagans Gould, L., Rhoades, B., & Leaf, P.J. (2010). Feasibility and preliminary outcomes of a school-based mindfulness intervention for urban youth. "Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 38," 985-99.

For more information, visit:
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