



mini mindful moments



to complement

Just Breathe

A Mindfulness Adventure

Quick, easy, engaging mindfulness activities for
children, adults and anything in between.

Try these at home or in class.

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Why mindfulness?

We practice mindfulness to train our brains not to react unnecessarily. It adds clarity to how we perceive situations. With mindfulness, many little things that used to make you angry or annoyed, no longer do so. This does not mean that you lose your passion or opinions – you are just more able to perceive what is worth being passionate or annoyed about.

How does it work?

We train our minds to focus on what is happening right now. If we're in the present moment, not thinking about anything in the past or worrying about the future, all we have is our sensations. What we feel, hear, see and taste. Unless there is an actual danger, or issue that needs to be fixed, those sensations bring us into a positive head-space.

Over time, we find that the practise of mindfulness helps us to distinguish between real, actual feelings, and all the extra mind-chatter that unnecessarily clutters our attention.

In time, this radically reduces stress and anxiety, and works to manage difficult emotions
- for people of any age.

Water Painting

You need:

Paint Brushes and rollers (varying sizes make it more fun)

A bucket or bowl of water

An outdoor surface that will mark easily when wet

This mindful moment is perfect for sunny days outside.

Grab a few paint brushes, sit outside in the sunshine and paint to your heart's content. The activity teaches us to enjoy the act of painting; the moment of creating, without being tied to an outcome - as the painting disappears in the sun. The joy comes from the flowing movements of the paintbrush, rather than creating a masterpiece.

This activity is bound to end up with an entire bucket of water on the ground.

That's ok - mindfulness teaches us to accept things as they are, even if they don't go completely to plan.



Name 3 things

You need:

Your senses

This is a great exercise to practice when trying to calm down from an overwhelming situation. It's also a very practical way of bringing yourself into the present moment. Try it out in the car, at home.. anywhere!

Simply:

Name 3 things you can see right now

Name 3 things you can hear right now

Name 3 things you can feel right now

You can always increase this to naming 4, 5 or more things. 'Seeing' is usually the easy one - 'hearing' and 'feeling' encourage us to really listen, or focus on what is around us (eg, I feel my shirt on my arms, ground under my feet and where my back touches the chair).



Tree Breathing

You need:

Proximity to a plant or tree - even better if you're surrounded by them! Combine it with a walk for excellent results.

It's an astonishing fact that trees breathe out what we breathe in (oxygen) and they breathe in, what we breathe out (carbon dioxide).

We know this, but how often do we talk about and actually think of it?

Here's a good way to bring this to life in a meaningful way:

1. Stand near the best tree you can find.
2. Greet it warmly, with gratitude.
3. Close your eyes, stand strong with your feet rooted in the ground.
If you like, spread your arms out like branches.
5. Breathe in the sweet oxygen that the tree has made for you
4. Breathe your carbon dioxide out and visualise it going into the tree
6. Repeat 10 times, and marvel at the fact that we are all one huge organism, keeping each other alive.



Belly Buddy Breathing

You need:

Yoga mat, or soft carpeted floor to lie on

A soft toy - preferably something a bit heavy and floppy

When we are born, we naturally breathe deeply, into our bellies. As we grow up, even as toddlers, we start to take shorter breaths - notice how the belly hardly moves, and most movement goes into the shoulders and chest. Deep, belly breathing has many physiological benefits, including reduced anxiety.

1. Lie down on the mat or floor, on your back.
2. Place your soft toy on your lower abdomen.
3. Breathe in slowly through your nose, making your belly rise up, watch the toy rise up on your belly and try to make it go as high as possible.
4. Breathe out, letting it sink. Make sure you do this carefully so the toy doesn't fall off. If it helps, gently place your hands on the toy.
5. Repeat 10 times .



Mindful Eating

You need:

A meal or a snack, preferably rich in colour and texture

A hungry participant

Your senses

Eating is a wonderful time to slow down and be present. So often, we eat in a rush, or are distracted while we eat. It's also a time when we're more likely to be sitting down and engaged, so a great time to develop mindful awareness.

Use your senses to experience the food:

1. Look - describe the food, talk about colours and shapes
2. Touch - use a fork or a finger to find out if it's soft, smooth, rough, squishy?
3. Listen - is it making any noises? Re visit listening when the food is being eaten, it might be crunchy!
4. Smell - describe the smell of the food
5. Taste - describe the flavour of the food, try to use a few words rather than just settling on 'yum'.



Lion Breathing

You need:

Enthusiastic participants with great imaginations

Lion breathing is a very powerful yoga technique, that makes some adults feel awkward in yoga classes, but children love! It is great at releasing pent up emotions and anxiety.

1. Tell children they are big, strong brave lions - get them to imagine this and take on the character of the lion
2. All kneel down on the floor with your hands resting on the floor in front of you - like a sitting lion
3. Take a huge breath in through the nose
4. Breathe out with a wide open lion mouth, head tilted back, sticking tongues out, and let out an almighty roar!
5. Repeat 4 times



This e-book was created to provide additional mindfulness activities, to complement the book “Just Breathe: A Mindfulness Adventure”. The book is published by New Shoots Publishing, and sold at Curiate.co.nz and Jensievers.com



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