

The Three Minute Breathing Space

Unlike meditations or a body scan, this exercise is quick to perform and easy to get started with a mindfulness practice in your busy life or that of your clients. With meditations and the body scan thoughts often pop up and keeping a quiet and clear head can be a challenge.

This last exercise of Three Minute Breathing Space can be the perfect technique for those with busy lives and minds. The exercise is broken into three sections, one per minute, and works as follows:

1. The first minute is spent on answering the question, “how am I doing right now?”, while focusing on the feelings, thoughts and sensations that arise and trying to give these words and phrases.
2. The second minute is spent on keeping awareness on the breath.
3. The last minute is used for an expansion of attention from solely focusing on the breath, feeling the in’s and out’s and how they affect the rest of the body.

This exercise can be rather challenging for keeping a quiet mind and often thoughts can pop up. The idea is not to block them, but rather just let them come into your mind and then disappear back out again. Try to just observe them.

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/#mindfulness-activities-groups>

Exercise 1: One Minute of Mindfulness

This is an easy mindfulness exercise, and one that you can do anytime throughout the day. Take a moment right now to try this. Check your watch and note the time. For the next 60 seconds your task is to focus all your attention on your breathing. It’s just for one minute, but it can seem like an eternity. Leave your eyes open and breathe normally. Be ready to catch your mind from wandering off (because it will) and return your attention to your breath whenever it does so.

This mindfulness exercise is far more powerful than most people give it credit for. It takes some people many years of practice before they are able to complete a single minute of alert, clear attention.

Keep in mind that this mindfulness exercise is not a contest or a personal challenge. You can’t fail at this exercise, you can only experience it.

Use this exercise many times throughout the day to restore your mind to the present moment and to restore your mind to clarity and peace.

Over time, you can gradually extend the duration of this exercise into longer and longer periods. This exercise is actually the foundation of a correct mindfulness meditation technique.

You can also use a mindfulness bell to focus your attention on, instead of your breathing. If you have struggled with mantra meditations or breathing meditation techniques in the past, then a mindfulness bell recording can really help you to focus your attention in the present moment and achieve a state of mental stillness.

Exercise 2: Conscious Observation

Pick up an object that you have lying around. Any mundane everyday object will do...a coffee cup or a pen for example. Hold it in your hands and allow your attention to be fully absorbed by the object. Observe it. Don't assess it or think about it, or study it intellectually. Just observe it for what it is.

You'll feel a sense of heightened "nowness" during this exercise. Conscious observation can really give you a feeling of "being awake". Notice how your mind quickly releases thoughts of past or future, and how different it feels to be in the moment. Conscious observation is a form of meditation. It's subtle, but powerful. Try it...by practicing mindfulness in this way you'll really start to sense what mindfulness is all about.

In the book *Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond*, Ajahn Brahm describes his own personal experience of conscious observation...

"The mind is like a megawatt searchlight, enabling you to see so much deeper into what you are gazing at. Ordinary concrete becomes a masterpiece. A blade of grass literally shimmers with the most delightful and brilliant shades of fluorescent green. ...the pretty becomes profound and the humdrum becomes heavenly under the sparkling energy of power mindfulness."

You can also practice conscious observation with your ears rather than your eyes. Many people find that mindful listening is a more powerful mindfulness technique than visual observation.

Exercise 3: The Ten Second Count

This is more of an exercise in practicing concentration than it is in mindfulness, and it is a simple variation on exercise 1. In this exercise, rather than focussing on your breath, you just close your eyes and focus your attention on slowly counting to ten. If your concentration wanders of, start back at number one! For most people, it goes something like this...

“One...two...three...do I have to buy milk today or did John say he’d do it? Oh, whoops, I’m thinking.”

“One...two...three...four...this isn’t so hard after all... Oh no....that’s a thought! Start again.”

“One...two...three... now I’ve got it. I’m really concentrating now...”

Exercise 4: Mindfulness Cues

In this exercise you focus your attention on your breathing whenever a specific environmental cue occurs. For example, whenever you hear the phone ring, you promptly bring your attention into the present moment and stay focussed on your breath.

Simply choose a cue that works for you. Perhaps you will choose to become mindful every time you look in the mirror. Perhaps it will be every time your hands touch each other. Perhaps it will be every time you hear a bird.

Mindfulness cues are an excellent mindfulness technique that are designed to snap you out of the unconscious “autopilot” state of mind and bring you back into the present moment.

Mindfulness Exercises: Taking it to the Next Level

These mindfulness exercises are designed to develop your ability to stay in the present moment and they are a great way to improve your ability to concentrate. If you practice these exercises, you’ll also find it easier to meditate, as you are strengthening all the right mental muscles in the process.

Ideally, mindfulness is something that you will learn to integrate into all the moments of your daily life. These easy exercises are a great way to help you experience moments of mindfulness - brief awakenings so to speak. To really experience the profound benefits of mindfulness, I encourage you to learn to gradually incorporate mindfulness into everything you do and ideally, to learn how to practise formal mindfulness meditation.

Take a look at these mindfulness activities and take another step towards a more conscious, enlightened and peaceful experience of life.

The Difference between Concentration and Mindfulness

It is important to realize that there is a difference between mindfulness and concentration. Concentration is important. It helps you to focus your attention on one thing or another, and in

this way it helps you to take command of what goes on in your mind. But mindfulness is another step beyond concentration. Mindfulness is a state of awareness. It is “presence” of mind.

Concentration is the tool you use to bring your mind into focus and to close the door on mental chatter, but it's still up to you to “show up” and be present in the moment.

If this doesn't quite make sense to you yet, then perhaps this information on how to practice mindfulness will clear things up.

<https://www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/mindfulness-exercises.html>