

Mindfulness - Basics

Two essential steps to Mindfulness practice are:

1. Repetition of a word, sound, praise, prayer or muscular activity.
2. Passively accepting and disregarding everyday thoughts that inevitably come to mind, returning to your repetition.

This is the generic technique I have taught patients and that I have used on myself for many years.

1. Pick a focus word, short phrase, or prayer that is firmly rooted in your belief system.
2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
3. Close your eyes
4. Begin by focusing on the rhythm of your breathing.
5. Relax your muscles, progressing from your feet to your calves, thighs, abdomen, shoulders, arms, hands, head and neck.
6. Breathe slowly and naturally, and as you do, say your focus word, sound, phrase or prayer silently to yourself as you exhale.
7. Assume a passive, non-critical, non-judgemental attitude. Don't worry how well you're doing. When other thoughts come to mind, simply accept the thought, feeling or sensation, name it, for example: thinking, planning, sadness, happiness, warm, cool, sore and gently return to your mindfulness practice.
8. Continue for ten to twenty minutes.
9. Do not stand immediately. Continue sitting quietly for a minute or so, allowing other thoughts to return. Then open your eyes and sit for another minute before rising.
10. Practice the technique once or twice daily. Good times to do so are before breakfast and before dinner.
11. You can practice Mindfulness whilst exercising or carrying out any activity. If you are jogging or walking pay attention to the cadence of your feet on the ground 'left, right, left, right' and when other thoughts come into your mind return to 'left, right, left, right.' Of course, keep your eyes open! Similarly, swimmers can pay attention to the tempo of their strokes, cyclists to the whirl of the wheels, dancers to the beat of the music, others to the rhythm of their breathing.

More Resources

'The Art of Living' – Ross Brittleton

'The Mindfulness Manual' Dr Craig Hassed

'The Relaxation Response' – Herbert Benson

'The Miracle of Mindfulness' Thich Nhat Hanh

The Centre for Mindfulness at Bangor University

www.actionforhappiness.org

www.authentic happiness.org

www.oxfordmindfulness.org

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