

Learn About Mindfulness

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with openness and curiosity. It sounds simple, but in our busy lives, it can be surprisingly hard to do. Many of us move through the day on “auto-pilot,” barely noticing what’s happening around us.

It’s common to get caught up in thoughts about the past or the future — what we could’ve done differently or what we need to do next. These thoughts can pull us away from what’s happening right now. When we’re distracted, it’s harder to connect with our bodies, feelings, and environment. We may overlook the good in our lives.

Practicing mindfulness can lower stress and improve overall well-being. Once we notice distractions or negative thoughts, we can interrupt them before they take over. This opens the door to enjoying ourselves, our surroundings, and thoughts in a more balanced way.

How can mindfulness help me?

Research shows that mindfulness supports your physical and emotional well-being. Regular practice can:

- Boost happiness
- Encourage healthy habits
- Improve concentration and increase self-awareness
- Lower stress levels

Mindfulness is also beneficial for our hearts and immune systems. Chronic stress can weaken immune function, making it more difficult for the body to fight infections. Meditation and relaxation can reverse that effect by increasing nitric oxide, which opens blood vessels and helps lower blood pressure.

How do I practice mindfulness?

There are many ways to practice mindfulness. You can try meditation, guided imagery, breathing exercises, or mindful movement, such as yoga or walking. Start when you're calm — this helps you build the habit before you need it most.

For more mental health educational resources, visit depressioncenter.org/toolkit.

This document provides general educational information developed by the Eisenberg Family Depression Center. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your health care provider if you have questions about your health or treatment options.