

Tips on getting the most from mindfulness exercises



When you do any mindfulness exercise, the key steps are:

- *Pay attention – for example, when you shower in the morning, make a special effort to really pay attention to the feel of the water on your skin.*
- *Notice – when your mind wanders, which is just what minds do, simply notice where your thoughts have drifted to.*

- *Choose and return – choose to bring your attention back to the present moment, usually by focusing on your breathing or another sensation in your body.*
- *Be aware and accept – notice and be aware of emotions you are feeling or sensations in your body. Try to observe and accept these feelings with friendly curiosity and without judgement.*
- *Be kind to yourself – remember that mindfulness is difficult to do and our minds will always wander. Try not to be critical of yourself. When you notice your mind wandering, you can just gently bring yourself back to the exercise.*

It can also help to:

- *Set aside regular time to practise. Regular short periods of mindful meditation can work better than occasional long ones. If you struggle to find the time, you might want to decide on one or two routine activities which you will try to do mindfully each day.*
- *Make yourself comfortable. It can help to do mindfulness in a space where you feel safe and comfortable and won't be easily distracted.*
- *Go slowly. Try to build your practice slowly. Remember, you're learning a new skill so it'll take time to develop. Most people find it hard to sit and meditate for long periods of time at first, so try to do a few minutes and gradually build up to more.*

- *Be patient. There's no need to set ambitious goals or put pressure on yourself. Many people find it takes a while to feel comfortable doing mindfulness exercises.*