

# + Mindfulness Practice

Being mindful means bringing your focus to the present moment, not jumping to worries about the past or future. By practicing the simple act of bringing our minds back to the here and now, we can train our brains to not leap so quickly to anxious thoughts when we're stressed. We can gradually learn to be with and accept ourselves and situations without passing judgment. This can help us feel calmer and better able to manage difficulties.

Here is a short practice you can try. If possible, try to do this practice for about 10 minutes each day to begin calming your stress response.

- + Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- + Sit in a comfortable position with your arms and legs uncrossed. Relax your body.
- + Close your eyes if comfortable doing so.
- + Bring your thoughts to what you are experiencing in this moment.
- + Notice the sensations of your body – your feet on the floor, the weight of your arms.
- + Now bring your focus to the natural in and out of your breathing.
- + Take a slow, deep breath. As you inhale, say the word “RELAX” to yourself.
- + As you exhale, say the word “CALM” to yourself.
- + Continue to breathe slowly and deeply.
- + Notice how the air moves in and out of your body and the sensations of your body as it does.
- + If your mind begins to wander. It's okay. Be kind to yourself. Give yourself credit for noticing. Then imagine your thoughts drifting away like clouds in the sky.
- + Gently return your focus to your breathing.
- + Continue this process for as long as you feel necessary.
- + When you feel relaxed, take a deep breath, exhale slowly, and open your eyes. Bring your thoughts back to your present environment.

You may also want to try a guided session:

**UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center<sup>1</sup>:** [uclahealth.org/uclamindful](https://uclahealth.org/uclamindful)

<sup>1</sup>Mindfulness Meditations created by Diana Winston and others for the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC). © 2011-2024 The Regents of the University of California. All Rights Reserved.

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