The Awareness of Breath practice develops your attention skills and self-awareness. It can also settle the mind and help with focus and concentration.

Basic instructions for the Awareness of Breath practice

1. Sit comfortably
   Be sure to sit in a comfortable position with a straight back. Have your eyes closed or look downwards with a soft gaze to limit distractions.

2. Still your body
   Allow your body to become still, as best you can.

3. Settle your mind
   Allow your mind to settle, as best you can.

4. Attend to your breathing
   Follow the feeling of the breath as you inhale and exhale. You can say silently to yourself, “breathing in” or “in” on the in-breath, and “breathing out” or “out” on the out-breath.

5. Notice your attention wandering and gently come back
   If your attention wanders, as it might, gently return your attention to the feeling of breathing in and breathing out.

6. Repeat as long as it is comfortable

“Use the breath as an anchor to tether your attention to the present moment. Your thinking mind will drift here and there, depending on the currents and winds moving in the mind until, at some point, the anchor line grows taut and brings you back.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

“With mindfulness — the practice of peace — we can begin by working to transform the wars within ourselves. Conscious breathing helps us do this.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Content developed by: Michael Apollo, President & Founder, Mindful Gateway Consulting and Melissa Nigrini, M.Ed., Senior Associate, Education & Learning Specialist
The STOP Practice

Try this practice to help you press pause, come into the present moment and create some space for introspection, and to get a better sense of what you are experiencing and what your options are for responding. This can be helpful in challenging moments at work or at home.

Stop for a moment. Take a pause from whatever you are doing.

Take a few breaths. Don’t try to control your breath; let your body breathe naturally as you follow the in-breath and out-breath with kind attention.

Observe your thoughts, emotions and body sensations. Try to notice what you are thinking without getting caught up by your own thoughts or perceptions. They may feel real, but they aren’t necessarily true. Notice what emotions are present and try naming them. Identifying emotions can have a calming effect. Bring awareness to any body sensations, without trying to change them or push them away.

Proceed with something that will support you in the moment, whether that is talking to a friend or just rubbing your shoulders.

“Mindfulness has helped me succeed in almost every dimension of my life. By stopping regularly to look inward and become aware of my mental state, I stay connected to the source of my actions and thoughts and can guide them with considerably more intention.”

Dustin Moskovitz (co-founder, Facebook & Asana)

“Now and then it’s good to pause in our pursuit of happiness, and just be happy.”

Guillaume Apollinaire

Content developed by: Michael Apollo, President & Founder, Mindful Gateway Consulting and Melissa Nigrini, M.Ed., Senior Associate, Education & Learning Specialist (adapted from the works of Elisha Goldstein, PhD)
Breathing Space Practice

The Breathing Space practice provides a pause to check in with what is happening in any given moment. In this practice, we pause to notice what we are experiencing with our thoughts, emotions and body sensations. We then turn to the breath for a few moments before widening our awareness to the entire body, and welcome any body sensations that are present.

The guidance for this practice is simple and easy to remember (AGE):

A
Acknowledge what is present for you now in both mind and body.

G
Gather your attention towards the breath sensations at your belly.

E
Expand your attention and bring a more open awareness to your experience.

Detailed instructions
/spend one minute, or as long as is comfortable in each part/

Begin by taking stock of your internal landscape, bringing mindful attention to all thoughts, emotions and body sensations that are present.

Next, narrow the focus of your attention by honing in on your breath, feeling the sensations of breathing in and out at the level of the abdomen.

Then, widen the field of your awareness to take in the entire body, bringing an open, accepting and kind attention to whatever sensations are arising and passing from moment to moment.

“Mindfulness is a pause – the space between stimulus and response: that is where choice lies.”
Tara Brach, PhD

“Directing attention where it needs to go is the primal task of leadership.”
Daniel Goleman, PhD

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Additional Resources

1. Sara Lazar, TEDxCambridge, How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains (9 minutes)
2. Dan Harris, How I Went from Skeptic to Meditator (7 minutes)
3. Dr. Dan Siegel, Discussing the Science of Mindfulness (21 minutes)

Mindfulness centres across Canada
If your city or town is not listed, please contact your nearest mindfulness centre for more information.

**Alberta**
The Mindfulness Institute
12603 63 Ave., Edmonton, AB
mindfulnessinstitute.ca

**British Columbia**
BC Association for Living Mindfully
PO Box 39001, Station James Bay, Victoria BC V8V 4X8
bcalm.ca
Mindful Living Stress Reduction and Counselling Services
203A-2678 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6K 2G3
mindful-living.ca

**Manitoba**
Canadian Mental Health Association of Manitoba and Winnipeg
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course
930 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3G 0P8

**New Brunswick**
Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick
Mindfulness
403 Regent St. (Suite 202), Fredericton, NB E3B 3X6

**Newfoundland and Labrador**
MBSR St. John's
mbsrstjohns.wordpress.com

**Nova Scotia**
Breathe Mindfulness Centre
46 Portland St., Dartmouth, NS
breathemindfulness.ca

Living Well Integrative Health Centre
2176 Windsor St., Halifax, NS
livingwellhc.ca/mindfulness

**Ontario**
The Centre for Mindfulness Studies
180 Sudbury St., Toronto, ON M6J 0A8
mindfulnessstudies.com

Mindfulness Thunder Bay
126 May St. S., Thunder Bay, ON P7E 1B3
mindfulnessthunderbay.ca

The Ottawa Mindfulness Clinic
595 Montreal Rd., Ottawa, ON K1K 4L2
ottawamindfulnessclinic.com

**Prince Edward Island**
University of Prince Edward Island
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course 550
University Ave., Charlottetown, PEI C1A 4P3

**Québec**
The Mindspace Clinic
1117 Sainte-Catherine St. W, Suite 514, Montreal, QC H3B 1H5
mindspaceclinic.com

Montreal Institute of Applied Mindfulness
6000 Ch de la Côte-des-Neiges, Suite 110-115, Montreal, QC H3S 1Z8
mpcmontreal.org

**Saskatchewan**
Prairie Centre for Mindfulness
2106 Lorne St., Regina, SK S4P 2M5
prairiemindfulness.ca