

# MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

It's normal to have thousands of random thoughts pop into your mind every day. However, it's difficult to focus when you keep getting 'hooked' by them. The good news is that you can use mindfulness to train yourself to focus on the tasks you need to, improve your sleep and manage difficult emotions without being so distracted by your thoughts, feelings or urges.

## MINDFUL BREATHING

- Close your eyes.
- Notice what happens in your body as you inhale and exhale, in your chest, stomach, shoulders, nose, and mouth.
- Notice the sensations in your body for the entire cycle of each breath in and out.
- Your mind will wander, thinking about other things.
- Notice this and without judgement bring your awareness back to your breath.


## MINDFUL SHOWERING

- Use your senses to fully experience your shower.
- See water running into the plug hole.
- Listen to water droplets hitting the shower floor.
- Smell the soap, shampoo and conditioner.
- Feel the sensations on your skin as warm water pours over you. Close your eyes and breathe in and out. Notice how enjoyable it is to shower!

## MINDFUL PHONE USE

**Smart phones are designed to get your attention.**

Within seconds of checking your phone, your attention is drawn to something new that pops up on your screen. As a result, your ability to sustain attention is reduced. When reading on your phone, notice the urge to look at other content, then choose to return your attention back to your reading. With regular practice, you'll increase your reading attention span.


 Take digital breaks, scheduling phone-free times in your day. Notice urges to check your phone and choose to bring your attention back to the task you're focussing on.

## MINDFUL OBSERVING

- Pick any object and observe it with curiosity, as though you are from outer space and it's the first time you've ever seen it.
- Notice its colours, light and shade, shape, etc.
- Notice when your mind wanders and starts thinking about other things.
- Gently return your focus back to observing the object.

## MINDFUL MUSIC LISTENING

**Instead of music being background noise, try focused listening. Just listen without eating, playing on your phone or watching something.**

-  Can you hear anything in the music you've never noticed before?
- What instruments can you hear? Listen to one instrument, then move your attention to another.
- What emotions do you feel as you listen?

## MINDFUL EATING

**Eat slowly, noticing what your food looks and smells like before eating it and what each mouthful tastes and feels like.**

Mindful eating helps you become aware of the sensations in your body when you see food, get the urge to eat, or feel hungry or full. Mindful eating reduces over-eating and snacking when you're stressed, sad, or bored. When you feel the urge to eat, ask yourself "am I hungry or am I eating for other reasons?" If you're not hungry, try another activity like walking or drinking water.