

Mindfulness Practical Toolkit

Any Grade Level



(WARNING: Side-effects will include calm, focused students)

Prepared for OISE students

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How Do I Introduce Mindfulness to a Class That Has Never Been Exposed to it?

Start out as a mini-lesson explaining what it means to be mindful. Show a video that explains it to kids. Example: (<https://youtu.be/awo8jUxIm0c>--Kids explain mindfulness).

Have a mini-discussion about what it feels like when you can't focus or calm down. Let students give examples of how they feel. Ask: Can you do your work when you feel upset, angry, distracted, hungry etc...?

Talk about how, before we can do good productive work, we must set our minds and bodies up to be ready. (Like before we play a game, we need to set up all the pieces or login etc...)

Mini-science lesson on the brain: When we meditate, grey matter in the brain that is associated with emotion, learning & memory increases and the area of the brain that holds stress, decreases. The brain is a muscle we need to give it a workout using meditation.

(<https://youtu.be/Aw71zanwMnY> --Scientific Power of Meditation)

What if a Teacher or Parent Questions Why I Want to Teach Mindfulness?

The answer is simple: Mindfulness is based on SCIENCE. There are thousands of studies to support how effectively mindfulness meditation improves learning and focus in students of all ages. Students who can't focus CAN'T learn, simple as that. Stress that western mindfulness is NOT religious, it is science-based.

Will the Effects of Mindfulness Happen Quickly?

It depends on the student. You will know the first session you give. For some it is instant, for others it takes a while to get comfortable enough with sitting still before they will participate effectively. For other's, it literally could be years later they realize how beneficial it is. You must give it time. Some students need longer to really get into it.

What if I Have One or Two Students Who Disrupt the Session for the Other Students?

First step--tell students if they are not ready to try this, it's ok. All they have to do is sit quietly and not bother anyone else. (They can have this time just to relax).

If there is a particularly difficult student who ruins it for everyone else, it's ok to remove the student from the group, and give them something else to do. Eventually, they will want to try when they are ready- give them time and space.

What Do I Do if Kids Giggle During Meditation?

Stay calm. It's really normal to giggle when people first learn to meditate. Tell them so and tell them it is okay. You may even have a giggle session first to get all that energy out. Many people, including kids are just not used to trying something so different. No one has ever told them it's ok to just sit and breathe and not do anything else.

When is a Good Time to Practice Mindfulness in the Classroom?

Before starting a lesson, before a test or presentation, anytime during the day when you feel the energy in the room is off--kids are acting up, tired or distracted.

I Have Content to Cover and Don't Have Time to Teach Mindfulness.

Think of it like this: Take a little extra time to teach the basic concept so students understand why mindfulness is effective. Then the practices only take a couple of minutes throughout the day depending on how much time you can give for it. Teachers who power through content and don't check for understanding will find that even though they taught for 60 minutes straight, students only listened for less than half that time because they got distracted. You can always make time for mindfulness.

Who Are Some Successful People Who Meditate?

- Oprah Winfrey
- Kobe Bryant
- Director X
- Bianca Andreescu

- Steve Jobs
- Bill Gates
- LeBron James
- Steph Curry
- J.Cole
- Jay Z
- Most people who are highly successful

Why Should My Students Learn to Meditate?

Commonalities of successful people are: focus, calm, ability to regulate emotions. You are giving your student the option to be successful in any area of study and life. It allows students to train their own brain. They will learn to trust themselves and be able to make their own decisions without needing as much external advice. All students will benefit, even the most unlikely ones.

Mindfulness Practices

From Mindfulness Without Borders

Anchor Breath

- Sit in a comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor.
- Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop.
- Close your eyes or look to the ground.
- Let your spine grow tall and noble like the trunk of a tall tree.
- Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
- Now, bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- Begin to make your breaths longer and deeper
- Notice each breath coming into the body as you inhale, and leaving the body as you exhale.
- If your mind is distracted with thoughts, emotions or body sensations, try to repeat this saying in your head: breathing in is a new beginning, breathing out is letting go.
- Just notice the thoughts happening in your mind, but try not to attach any emotions to the thoughts. Just accept them and let them go.
- At the end of your next exhalation, bring your awareness to where the breath first enters the body.
- Breathing in, follow the path of the breath as it moves down to the chest.
- Notice the chest rising with each in-breath and falling with each out-breath.
- With your next in-breath, follow the breath as it moves down to the lower belly.
- Allow the belly to expand and contract with each cycle of breath.
- Continue to trace the path of the breath as you breathe in and out.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room.

Take 5

- Sit in a comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor.
- Gently close your eyes or look for a point somewhere on the floor where you can return your eyes when you get distracted.
- Turn one hand palm up to the ceiling. This will be your counting hand. At the end of each breath cycle, you will fold one finger on this hand into your palm until all five fingers are folded.
- Take a breath in to fill your lungs, notice the pause that naturally happens once the in-breath is complete.
- Gently breath one long breath out until you notice the natural pause again. Fold your first finger. This is TAKE ONE.
- Gently take another in-breath to fill your lungs. Notice the pause that happens naturally once the in-breath is complete.
- Gently breathe out until your breath comes to a pause. Fold your second finger. This is TAKE TWO.
- Breathe in again, filling up our lungs until you feel the pause. Breathe out to empty the lungs until you feel the pause. Fold your third finger. This is TAKE THREE.
- Breathe in; notice the pause. Breathe out; notice the pause. Fold your fourth finger. This is TAKE FOUR.
- Now, breathe in following the whole length of the breath. Breathe out, following the whole length of the breath. This time, turn your counting hand palm down. This is TAKE FIVE.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to your surroundings and take a moment to notice how you feel.

Mindful Listening

- Sit in a comfortable position. Allow both soles of your feet to connect to the floor.
- Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop.
- Gently close your eyes or soften your gaze downwards.
- Let your spine grow tall and noble like the trunk of a tall tree.
- Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
- Now bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- You don't need to breathe in a special way. Your body knows how to breathe.
- Stretch your listening out to the farthest sounds you can hear.
- Notice the sounds as they appear, linger and vanish.
- Allow sounds to come and go, just like the breath comes and goes.
- Gradually begin to focus on more immediate sounds and simply notice as they appear, linger and vanish.
- If you get distracted, notice what is distracting you and gently redirect your attention back to the experience of hearing.
- Bring your attention back to the sound of your own breath.
- Notice each breath coming into the body with an inhale and leaving the body with an exhale.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to your surroundings and let how you feel now guide you.

Body Scan

- Begin lying down on your back, or seated upright with arms relaxed by your side on your lap.
- Take a moment to settle into your body, closing your eyes or softening your gaze downwards.
- Bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- With each exhalation, allow your body weight to let go and be fully received by the floor or the chair.
- At the end of your next exhale, open your awareness to your entire body.
- No sensation is right or wrong; the intention is to simply notice how the body feels right here, right now.
- At the end of your next exhale, bring your attention to focus on the back and the top of your head.
- Simply notice what sensations arise and remain open to the experience.
- If you get distracted by other thoughts, emotions or even other sensations in the body, without self-criticism or thinking that you can't do this, simply redirect your attention to the experience of the back and top of your head.
- Bring your attention to focus on your face – from forehead to chin and from ear to ear, let all the facial muscles soften.
- At the end of your next exhale, shift your attention to focus on the length of your arms – from your shoulders right down to your wrists.
- Bring your attention to your hands – the palms of your hands, the back of your hands, the fingers and nails.
- Notice the sensation of touch between the hand and the surface where it is resting.

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- Place your attention in the area of your torso, from the chest all the way down to the belly.
- Notice the rising and falling of the chest, as you breathe in and out.
- You may notice movement on your belly or the sensation of hunger.
- If you get distracted, take note of what distracted you and let it go by bringing your attention back to the area of the torso.
- At the end of your next exhale, bring your awareness to focus on the length of your legs – from the hips all the way down to the ankles.
- Bring your attention to your feet – include the soles of the feet, the tops of the feet, the toes and nails.
- No sensation is right or wrong. Simply, notice what arises and remain open to whatever the body is telling you.
- Open your awareness to your whole body.
- Notice how your body feels now.
- Become aware of the physical sensations of the breath.
- Continue to breathe for a few moments – aware of your body, and aware of your breath.
- When you are ready, bring your attention back to the room.

Mindful Walking

- Begin standing upright with arms relaxed by your side.
- Notice the feeling of touch between both soles of your feet and the surface where they are resting.
- Take a moment to settle into your body, softening your gaze downwards.
- Bring your attention to the flow of your breath.
- Notice each breath coming into the body as you inhale and leaving the body as you exhale.
- At the end of your next out-breath, begin walking slowly and attentively.
- Feel each foot lift, swing and touch the ground.
- With each new step, feel the weight of the body shift as one foot comes forward.
- If you get distracted by other thoughts, emotions or body sensations, simply redirect your attention back to the experience of walking.
- Continue to walk slowly for the next several minutes, directing your attention to the experience of walking.
- When you are ready, bring both feet together to a standstill and connect with your surroundings.

Right-Left Nostril Breathing

- Sit in a comfortable position with your feet touching the ground.
- Place your left hand on your left knee.
- Lift your right hand up toward your nose.
- Exhale completely and then use your right thumb to close your right nostril.
- Inhale through your left nostril and then close the left nostril with your fingers.
- Open the right nostril and exhale through this side.
- Inhale through the right nostril and then close this nostril.
- Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side.
- This is one cycle.
- Continue for up to 5 minutes.
- Always complete the practice by finishing with an exhale on the left side.