



Mindfulness Matters

Living in the Moment Can Improve Your Health

What is Mindfulness?

At some point in your life, someone probably told you: “Enjoy every moment. Life is short.” Maybe you’ve smiled and rolled your eyes at this well-intentioned relative or co-worker. But the fact is, there’s something to it. Trying to enjoy each moment may actually be good for your health.

The idea is called mindfulness. This ancient practice is about being completely aware of what’s happening in the present—of all that’s going on inside and all that’s happening around you. It means not living your life on “autopilot.” Instead, you experience life as it unfolds moment to moment, good and bad, without judgment or preconceived notions, and with kindness towards yourself.

Mindfulness meditation is a formal way to learn and practice mindfulness. Meditation exercises help you learn to pay attention to your thoughts, your actions and your body in the present. Through meditation practice, mindfulness can become a natural way of experiencing each moment in your life.

Mindfulness can be helpful for successfully coping with stress, anxiety or depressive thoughts. It can also be helpful for maintaining good health habits. For example, studies have shown that mindfulness can help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight. This is because it is common for people to watch TV and eat snack food without really attending to how much they are eating. With mindful eating, you eat when you’re hungry, focus on each bite, enjoy your food more and stop when you’re full.

What Are Some Kinds of Classes and Treatments that Use Mindfulness Meditation?

There are a number of stress-reduction and psychotherapy treatments that use the concept of “mindfulness” and mindfulness meditation.

- **Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)** is an 8 week class that uses mindfulness meditation for the purpose of improving health and quality of life, alleviating stress, and fostering awareness and relaxation. These classes (groups of 10 - 20 people) usually meet for 2-3 hours a week, and people do daily mindfulness “homework” using audio recordings. MBSR has been found to be helpful for people with highly stressful medical problems like cancer, chronic pain, fibromyagia, and cardiovascular disease. Even though MBSR is not a psychotherapy, people with anxiety can also find benefit.
- **Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)** is a group psychotherapy for depression and anxiety that combines mindfulness practices with traditional cognitive therapy techniques. MBCT groups are smaller (6-12 people) and are led by licensed mental health professionals. MBCT has been found to be effective in improving depression and anxiety. Some recent studies show it is as effective as continuous antidepressant medication in preventing relapse in people with chronic depression.
- **Mindfulness-based Relapse Prevention** for alcohol dependence
- **Mindfulness-based programs** for smoking cessation
- **Mindfulness and Compassion Therapy** for depression and anxiety
- **Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training** for binge-eating disorders

There are also mindfulness groups for teens and children, and a number of other forms of classes and therapy groups.

How Can I Become Mindful?

The concept of mindfulness is simple, but becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Take some deep breaths.** Breathe in through your nose to a count of 4, hold for 1 second and then exhale through the mouth to a count of 5. Repeat often.
- **Enjoy a stroll.** As you walk, notice your breath and the sights and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, note them but then return to the present.
- **Practice mindful eating.** Be aware of taste, textures and flavors in each bite, and listen to your body when you are hungry and full.
- **Find mindfulness resources in your local community,** including yoga and meditation classes, mindfulness-based stress reduction programs and books.

Where can I learn more?

The following websites include general information, guided meditations, reading lists and a free 8 week stress reduction program (Palouse Mindfulness).

- <http://marc.ucla.edu/>
- <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>
- <http://palousemindfulness.com/selfguidedMBSR.html>

University of Michigan Mindfulness Resources

- **U-M Health System Cardiovascular Center** offers Beginning Meditation and Deepening Meditation classes for a fee. Classes are open to the public. To learn more visit: <http://www.umcvc.org/mindfulness-meditation> or call 734-998-5679.
- **MHealthy** offers meditation classes for a fee for faculty, staff, students, and the public. Visit: <http://www.hr.umich.edu/mhealthy/> or call (734) 647-7888
- **U-M Geriatrics Center** offers Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy Group and Mindfulness-Based Forgiveness Therapy Group for those age 60 plus.

To learn more contact Mariko Foulk, (734) 764-2556 or email:
mfoulk@umich.edu

- **U-M Depression Center** offers Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) group for prevention of depression relapse. To learn more contact Sharon Mudd, (734) 764-0231 or email: samudd@umich.edu
- **University of Michigan Psychological Clinic** offers Mindfulness and Compassion Group Therapy for Depression and Anxiety. To learn more visit: <http://www.psychclinic.org/> or call the clinic at: (734) 764-3471

Ann Arbor Mindfulness Resources:

This information is time sensitive and may change. Please contact the organizations to confirm days and times of events.

- **Ann Arbor Open Meditation** offers drop-in mindfulness meditation sessions, on Thursday evenings. A \$5.00 donation is optional. To learn more visit: <http://aaopenmeditation.com/>
- **Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness** Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness provides information at its website on classes, drop-in sessions, retreats, and special presentations. Visit: <http://aacfm.com/> to learn more.
- **Inward Bound Yoga** offers Mindful Yoga Tuesday evenings with Julie Woodward for a fee. Visit: <http://ibyoga.org/>
- **Insight Meditation Ann Arbor** hosts classes, lectures, and group meditations. Visit: <http://insightmeditationannarbor.org>

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction classes are offered by the following practitioners:

- Libby Robinson, PhD, MSW, (734) 476-3070, libbyrobinson7@gmail.com,
http://www.aacfm.com/Libby_Robinson.html
- Paulette Grotrian, MA, (734) 276-7707, grotrian@wcc.net,
http://aacfm.com/Paulette_Grotrian.html

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (group therapy for depression) is offered by:

- Lynn Sipher, LMSW at (734) 332-3365, lynnsipher@gmail.com,
<http://www.lynnsipher.com/Mindfulness.html>
- Mariko Foulk, LMSW at (734) 764-2556, mfoulk@umich.edu
through U-M Geriatrics Center for those age 60 plus.

The following Buddhist groups have classes and/or drop-in meditation sessions:

- **Deep Springs** offers introductory meditation classes for a fee.
<http://www.deepspring.org/>
- **Insight Meditation** Ann Arbor offers meditation classes for all levels, donation recommended. Visit:
<http://insightmeditationannarbor.org/meditation-classes.html>
- **Jewel Heart** offers mindfulness meditation classes for a fee, or free for members. <http://www.jewelheart.org/chapters/ann-arbor/>
- **Michigan Buddhist** provides locations of mindfulness sessions in Ann Arbor as well as resources on Buddhism. Visit:
<http://www.michiganbuddhist.com/ann-arbor/>
- **Still Mountain Meditation:** This new sangha offers weekly Sunday meditation sitting at U-M Turner Senior Resource Center (2401 Plymouth Rd. Suite C) at 10 am, open to everyone. Also they offer a variety of meditation classes. To learn more visit <http://stillmountainmeditation.org/>
- **The Zen Buddhist Temple** offers meditation courses at all levels for a fee.
<http://www.zenbuddhisttemple.org/>

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Adapted from:

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NCCIH. [*Meditation: What You Need To Know*](#)
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