

# MINDFUL MOMENTS

## DECEMBER: MINDFULNESS

### Introduction

We all lead hectic lives – which sometimes, can become a bit overwhelming and lead to mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Mindfulness is a useful technique which can help you manage different areas of your life. It can help you to become more self-aware, feel calmer, less stressed, cope with difficult thoughts and be kinder towards yourself.



### How can I help myself with mindfulness?

#### How does mindfulness work:

The way we think can affect how we feel and act e.g. if we worry about future events, we might feel anxious. Mindfulness helps you to bring your attention to the present by focussing on your body and breathing. This can help you to **notice how thoughts come and go in your mind** and can help you learn they don't define who you are and can be let go of. You can **notice what your body is telling you**,

such as tension or anxiety being felt in your body as well as **creating space between you and your thoughts**, to help you react more calmly. You could try different mindfulness exercises:

- **Mindful eating:** paying attention to taste, sight and textures.
- **Mindful walking:** the feeling of moving.
- **Meditation:** focussing on your breathing and thoughts.
- **Body scan:** thinking about how different parts of your body feel.

### How does it impact me at work?

Studies show that practising mindfulness can help to manage depression, anxiety and feelings of stress. While it's not a cure as such, and doesn't work every single time, it can help you to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Different things work for different people, so if you don't find one mindfulness exercise useful, try another. You can also try adapting them so that they suit you and are easier to fit in with your daily life.

### Support Available

- [Be Mindful](#) (part of the Mental Health Foundation charity) runs a 4-week online mindfulness course developed by qualified teachers.
- [Breathworks](#) offers mindfulness courses to manage pain, stress and illness.
- The Mind charity website has a page of [mindfulness exercises](#) you can try and tips on doing mindfulness by yourself.

### Tips to help you get the most from mindfulness:

1. **Pay attention** – for example, when you shower in the morning, make a special effort to really pay attention to the feel of the water on your skin.
2. **Notice** – when your mind wanders, simply notice where your thoughts have drifted to.
3. **Choose and return** – choose to bring your attention back to the present, usually by focusing on your breathing or another sensation in your body.
4. **Be aware and accept** – notice and be

aware of emotions or sensations in your body. Observe and accept these feelings with curiosity and without judgement.

5. **Be kind to yourself** – remember that mindfulness is difficult, and our minds will always wander. Try not to be critical of yourself and when you notice your mind wandering, gently bring yourself back to the exercise.
6. **Set aside time to practice** – Regular short periods of mindfulness can work better than occasional long ones.