



Health Matters Well-Being Toolkit: Mindfulness at Work

Practice mindfulness in your office for a calmer working environment.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS

The Cambridge Dictionary defines mindfulness as “the practice of being aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment, thought to create a feeling of calm.” It means being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings instead of going through life on autopilot. Mindfulness matters because it can help manage stress, anxiety, and depression. It has also been associated with a greater enthusiasm for life and improved self-esteem.

AVOID BEING ON AUTOPILOT

Research shows the average person spends nearly 47% of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they are doing. That means we are spending almost half of our time operating on autopilot. During a busy workday finding time for a 30-minute mindful exercise can feel impossible. But that does not mean you cannot be mindful at work. Mindful exercises can be as short as you want. Even one minute of consciously connecting with one of your senses can be classified as a mindful exercise. You do not even need to close your eyes or be sitting down. Be creative and find short times in your day to add a bit of mindfulness. Think of mindfulness as a muscle. The more you exercise your mindful muscle, the stronger it becomes.

“Mindfulness isn’t difficult, we just need to remember to do it.” – Sharon Salzberg

MINDFUL REMINDERS

Add a few regular reminders throughout your day to prompt you to be mindful.

- Set an alarm on your phone (try a vibrating alarm that will not disturb coworkers).
- Make an appointment with yourself by adding a mindfulness moment to your calendar.
- Put a small note or picture on your desk that will remind you to be mindful.

S.T.O.P. STRESS

Mindfulness not only reduces stress in the moment, but also builds resilience against future stressors. Practicing mindfulness helps control racing, repetitive, and non-productive thoughts that create unnecessary stress. Focusing on the present moment allows you to gain perspective and realize that you hold the power to regulate how you respond to pressure. S.T.O.P. is a tool you can use to practice mindfulness, especially during stressful moments at work. Next time you notice that a stressor has triggered you, follow these steps:

- **Slow down** and stop what you are doing.
- **Take a breath** to center yourself and come back to the present moment.
- **Observe** what is going on with your body, emotions, and thoughts. What are you feeling in your body? What are you thinking? What realistic possibilities exist?
- **Proceed** with something that will support you in the moment like talking with a coworker or taking a walk.

MINDFULNESS IDEAS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Use the following ideas to help you incorporate more mindfulness into your workplace.

- **Mindful Minute:** Start meetings with a mindful minute and three deep breaths to allow everyone to get settled and focus on being present for the conversation.
- **Mid-Day Mindfulness:** Play an online mindfulness video in a conference room or over a virtual meeting during the lunch hour for employees to try together. *Be sure to maintain appropriate physical distance and wear face masks if meeting in a conference room.*
 - [Guided Breathing Exercises](#)
 - [Mindfulness Exercises](#)
 - [Mindfulness Body Scan](#)
- **Mindful Walk:** Take mindful walks during breaktimes to clear your mind and encourage your coworkers to try it too! Take a 5-minute stroll without your phone. Concentrate on the physical sensations of walking including the sights, sounds, and feelings of each step. It is normal for your mind to wander, so when it does, return your focus to your body by repeating "left, right, left, right" as you put one foot in front of the other.

*"The ability to be in the present moment
is a major component of mental wellness."*

- Abraham Maslow

SOURCES

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