



## Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program



Dr. Nick Karayannis, MPT, PhD  
*Center for Mindfulness Qualified MBSR Teacher  
Certified Yoga and Tai Chi Teacher*

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### 10 Steps to Mindfulness Meditation

*From The Garrison Institute*

- 1. Create time and space.** Choose a regular time each day for mindfulness meditation practice, ideally a quiet place free from distraction
- 2. Set a timer.** Start with 5 minutes and ease your way up to 15-40 minutes.
- 3. Find a comfortable sitting position.** Sit cross-legged on the floor, on the grass, or in a chair with your feet flat on the ground.
- 4. Check your posture.** Sit up straight, hands in a comfortable position. Keep neck long, chin tilted slightly downward, tongue resting on roof of mouth. Relax shoulders. Close eyes or gaze downward 5-10 feet in front of you.
- 5. Take deep breaths.** Deep breathing helps settle the body and establish your presence in the space.
- 6. Direct attention to your breath.** Focus on a part of the body where the breath feels prominent: nostrils, back of throat, or diaphragm (stomach). Try not to switch focus.
- 7. Maintain attention to your breath.** As you inhale and exhale, focus on the breath. If attention wanders, return to the breath. Let go of thoughts, feelings or distractions.
- 8. Repeat steps 6-7.** For the duration of the meditation session. The mind will wander. Simply acknowledge this and return to your breath.
- 9. Be kind to yourself.** Don't be upset if focus occasionally drifts or if you fall asleep. If very tired, meditate with eyes open and rearrange posture to more erect (but still relaxed) position.
- 10. Prepare for a soft landing.** When the timer goes off, keep eyes closed until you're ready to open them. Be thankful. Acknowledge your practice with gratitude.



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### Ways to Informally Weave Mindfulness Into the Day

*From Dr. Saki Santorelli*

- ❖ Take a few minutes in the morning to be quiet and meditate, sit or lie down and be with yourself, listen to the sounds of nature or take a slow, quiet walk.
- ❖ While your car is warming up, take a moment to quietly pay attention to your breathing.
- ❖ While driving, become aware of body tension, e.g., hands around the steering wheel, shoulders raised, stomach tight, etc. Consciously work at releasing that tension. Does being tense help you to drive better? What does it feel like to relax and drive?
- ❖ Decide not to play the radio and be with yourself.
- ❖ Stay in the right lane and go the speed limit.
- ❖ Pay attention to your breathing or to the sky, trees, when stopped at a red light or toll plaza.
- ❖ After parking your car at your workplace, take a moment to orient yourself to your workday.
- ❖ While sitting at your desk, monitor body sensations and tension levels, and consciously attempt to relax and let go.
- ❖ Use your breaks to truly relax rather than simply “pause”. For example, instead of having coffee, take a 2-5 minute walk, or sit at your desk and recoup.
- ❖ At lunch, changing your environment can be helpful.
- ❖ Try closing the door (if you have one) and take some time to consciously relax.
- ❖ Decide to “stop” for 1-3 minutes every hour during the workday. Become aware of your breathing and bodily sensations. Use it as a time to regroup and recoup.
- ❖ Use everyday cues in your environment as reminders to “center” yourself, e.g., the telephone ringing, turning on the computer, etc.
- ❖ Take some time at lunch or break to share with close associates. Choose topics not necessarily work related.
- ❖ Choose to eat one or two lunches per week in silence. Use it as a time to eat slowly and be with yourself.
- ❖ At the end of the workday, retrace your activities of the day, acknowledging and congratulating yourself for what you’ve accomplished and make a list for tomorrow.
- ❖ Pay attention to the short walk to your car, breathing in the crisp air. The feeling of the cold or warmth of your body, try to accept it rather than resist it. Listen to the sounds outside the office. Can you walk without feeling rushed?
- ❖ While your car is warming up, sit quietly, and consciously make the transition from work to home. Take a moment to simply be; enjoy it for the moment. Like most of us, you’re headed into your next full-time job: home!
- ❖ While driving, notice if you are rushing. What does it feel like? What could you do about it? Remember, you’ve got more control than you imagine.
- ❖ When you pull into the driveway or park on the street, come back to the present. Orient yourself to home.
- ❖ Change out of your work clothes when you get home; it helps you to make a smoother transition into your next “role”. Say hello to each family member; center yourself to home. If possible, make time to take 5-10 minutes to be quiet and still.

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### More Ways to Informally Weave Mindfulness Into the Day

*From Dr. Bob Stahl*

- ❖ As you open your eyes in the morning, instead of jumping out of bed, take a few moments to do a mindful check-in. By starting the day with greater present moment awareness, you'll set the stage for a greater sense of calm and equanimity during challenging moments throughout your day.
- ❖ As you bathe, notice if your mind is already thinking, planning, and rehearsing for the day ahead. When you become aware of this, gently bring your mind back to the moment: being in the shower, smelling the soap, feeling the sensation of the water on your body, listening to the sound of it in the shower.
- ❖ If you live with others, try taking a few moments to listen and connect with them mindfully before you head out for the day.
- ❖ As you approach your car, walk more slowly, check in with your body, and notice any tension. Try to soften it before you begin your drive.
- ❖ When you drive, find opportunities to try driving a little slower. Use red lights as a reminder to notice your breathing.
- ❖ Walking is something we definitely tend to do on autopilot. As you walk to your office or to run errands, walk differently. For example, you might walk more slowly, or you could breath in for three steps, then breathe out for three steps. Notice the sensations of walking – in your feet and throughout your body.
- ❖ When doing tasks at work, block out time to focus on a group of similar tasks. For example, block out time just for planning and don't attend to other tasks during that time. If you can, turn off your e-mail during times when you're focusing on other tasks.
- ❖ If possible, maybe once a week, have a meal by yourself in silence, eating slightly slower than you usually do and really tuning in to flavors and textures as you eat.
- ❖ Throughout the day, do mindful check-ins from time to time. You can schedule them on your calendar, or you can link them to certain activities, such as prior to checking your e-mail or before your drive in rush hour traffic.
- ❖ It's counterproductive to rush home to relax, so try driving home mindfully and slightly slower. Feel your hands on the steering wheel, and mindfully take in each moment. You could turn off the radio and reflect on what you did that day. What was positive, and what would you like to do better? Another possibility is to intentionally plan how you would like to be when you get home, perhaps putting mindful listening on the agenda.
- ❖ When you get home, do a mindful check-in before you walk in the door, noticing if your body is tense. If it is, try to soften those muscles by breathing into them with awareness and just letting them be.



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### Resource List

#### Supplies to support your sitting meditation and yoga practice

Cushions – There are many different shapes and sizes, and filled with different materials (Kapok/cotton, buckwheat, memory foam, etc.). Wedge-shaped cushions can be more comfortable for those experiencing buttock or upper thigh pain. A meditation bench, where you adapt a tall kneeling posture, can be a good alternative for people whom have difficulty meditating with their legs crossed. Support cushions can provide further comfort.

Mats – These are used as a floor base to provide support for your thighs, legs, and feet

- [http://www.dharmacrafts.com/00\\_ms/meditation-supplies](http://www.dharmacrafts.com/00_ms/meditation-supplies)
- <http://www.sunandmoonoriginals.com/>



#### Yoga mats and bolsters

- <https://www.jadeyoga.com/collections/yoga-mats>
- <https://www.manduka.com/yoga-mats.html>

#### Find a meditation group in your community

- <http://www.buddhistinsightnetwork.org/sanghas>

#### Find a certified yoga teacher in your community

<http://www.iayt.org/search/custom.asp?id=1156>

#### Find a certified Tai Chi teacher in your community

<https://taichiforhealthinstitute.org/instructors/>

#### Find a day-long/multi-day silent retreat in your community

- <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/training/retreats/>
- <https://www.spiritrock.org/residential-retreats>
- <http://www.insightretreatcenter.org/>



#### Meditation timers

<https://insighttimer.com/>

#### Further listening and reading recommendations

*Listen to audio talks on mindfulness:*

- <http://www.audiodharma.org/> (Insight Meditation Center)
- <https://www.spiritrock.org/audio-talks> (Spirit Rock Meditation Center)
- <https://www.dharma.org/resources/audio/> (Insight Meditation Society)

*Articles and books on mindfulness:*

- <https://www.mindfulnesscds.com/pages/books-by-jon-kabat-zinn> (Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn)
- <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/about-us/people/2-meet-our-faculty/santorelli-saki/publications/> (Dr. Saki Santorelli)
- <https://www.mindfulnessprograms.com/books/> (Dr. Bob Stahl)
- <https://www.spiritrock.org/articles> (From multiple mindfulness teachers)