

Informal Mindfulness

Meditation is a great way to practice mindfulness skills, but you can also practice “informally” by doing normal everyday activities mindfully. This exercise contains some suggestions for informal mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness of chores

Pick an activity such as ironing clothes, washing dishes, vacuuming floors – something mundane that you must do to make your life work – and do it mindfully.

If boredom or frustration arises, simply acknowledge it, and bring your attention back to the task at hand. When thoughts arise, acknowledge them, let them be, and bring your attention back to what you are doing.

Again, and again, your attention will wander. As soon as you realize this has happened, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to your current activity.

Mindfulness of pleasant activities

Pick an activity you enjoy such as cuddling with a loved one, eating lunch, stroking the cat, playing with the dog, walking in the park, listening to music, having a soothing hot bath, and so on.

Do this activity mindfully: engage in it fully, using all five of your senses, and savor every moment. If and when your attention wanders, as soon as you realize it, note what distracted you, and re-engage in whatever you are doing.

Answer the following questions to reflect on your practice today.

1. What sensations did you feel?
2. What thoughts did you have?
3. What emotions did you feel?
4. How aware of your thoughts and feelings were you? (0= not at all, 10 = completely)
5. How open to your thoughts and feelings were you? (0= not at all, 10 = completely)
6. What benefits or difficulties did you experience?