



Mindfulness



“ Helps to relieve your stress, feelings of anxiousness and improve your mood ”

- ⊕ Mindfulness is a very simple form of meditation that was little known in the West until recent years. A typical meditation consists of focusing your full attention on your breath as it flows in and out of your body. Focusing on each breath in this way allows you to observe your thoughts as they arise in your mind and, little by little, to let go of struggling with them. You come to realise that thoughts come and go of their own accord; that you are not your thoughts. You can watch as they appear in your mind, seemingly from thin air, and watch again as they disappear, like a soap bubble bursting. You come to the profound understanding that thoughts and feelings (including negative ones) are transient (they don't last), they come and they go & ultimately, you have a choice about whether to act on them or not.
- ⊕ Mindfulness is about observation without criticism; being compassionate with yourself. When unhappiness or stress hover overhead, rather than taking it all personally, you learn to treat them as if they were black clouds in the sky, and to observe them with friendly curiosity as they drift past. In essence, mindfulness allows you to catch negative thought patterns before they tip you into a downward spiral. It begins the process of putting you back in control of your life.
- ⊕ Over time, mindfulness brings about long-term changes in mood and levels of happiness and wellbeing. Scientific studies have shown that mindfulness not only prevents depression, but that it also positively affects the brain patterns underlying day-to-day anxiety, stress, depression and irritability so that when they arise, they dissolve away again more easily.
- ⊕ Other studies have shown that regular meditators see their doctors less often and spend fewer days in hospital. Memory improves, creativity increases and reaction times become faster. Despite these proven benefits, however, many people are still a little wary when they hear the word ‘meditation’. Here are a few facts that might help to dispel some myths too:

- ❖ ***Meditation is not a religion. Mindfulness is simply a method of mental training. Many people who practise meditation are themselves religious, but then again, many atheists and agnostics are keen meditators too.***
- ❖ ***You don't have to sit cross-legged on the floor (like the pictures you may have seen in magazines or on TV), but you can if you want to. Most people who attend classes will sit on chairs to meditate. You can also practise bringing mindful awareness to whatever you are doing, on buses, trains or while walking to work. You can meditate more or less anywhere.***
- ❖ ***Mindfulness practice does not take a lot of time, although some patience and persistence are required. Many people soon find that meditation liberates them from the pressures of time, so they have more of it to spend on other things.***
- ❖ ***Meditation is not complicated. Nor is it about ‘success’ or ‘failure’. Even when meditation feels difficult, you'll have learned something valuable about the workings of the mind and thus have benefited psychologically.***
- ❖ ***It will not deaden your mind or prevent you from striving towards important career or lifestyle goals; nor will it trick you into falsely adopting a Pollyanna attitude to life.***

- ⊕ Meditation is not about accepting the unacceptable. It is about seeing the world with greater clarity so that you can take wiser and more considered action to change those things that need to be changed.
- ⊕ Mindfulness has been shown to provide benefit and relief to many who suffer with distressing symptoms related to anxiety, panic disorders, stress and depression.

Here are some Young people friendly references and signposting to some websites / apps / resources that can assist you in the area of relieving symptoms of stress, anxiety and low mood through meditation and relaxation methods + some reliable sources for COVID 19 information.

Mindfulness resources

Headspace (website on Mindfulness plus free app)

- <https://www.headspace.com>

NHS (nhs.uk) (NHS Choices information on accessing mindfulness)

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/mindfulness.aspx>

Mind (UK mental health charity with information and resources on mindfulness)

- <https://www.mond.org.uk>

Be Mindful (Mental Health Foundation, information about Mindfulness)

- <https://bemindful.co.uk>

Young people friendly 'apps' & resources

Calmharm (UK charity on children & young people's mental health)

- <https://calmharm.co.uk>

Clearfear (Free app to help with managing anxiety)

- <https://www.clearfear.co.uk>

DistrACT (Provides help around self harm and suicidal thoughts)

- <https://www.themix.org.uk>

MindfulGnats (Helps young people develop mindfulness and relaxation skills)

- <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/mindful-gnats/id973919092>

MindShift (Canadian app with advice managing anxiety and depression)

- <https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/new-mindshift-cbt-app-gives-canadians-free-anxiety-relief/>

MeeTwo (Helps teenagers to talk about difficult things)

- <https://www.meetwo.co.uk>

Mood Gym (Interactive program to help with low mood, based on cognitive behaviour and interpersonal therapy)

- <https://moodgym.com.au>

Recharge-move well, sleep well, be well (Program to help improve mood and energy levels)

- <https://apps.apple.com/au/app/recharge-move-well-sleep-well-be-well/id878026126>

Sleepio (online sleep improvement programme)

- <https://www.sleepio.com>

Smiling minds (Australian app-based meditation programme)

- <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/smiling-mind/id560442518>

UK information websites on COVID-19

NHS (nhs.uk) website COVID-19 advice

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Government (gov.uk) website COVID-19 advice

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Please keep safe and healthy

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