

# MINDFUL LIVING

## EXERCISE

Mindfulness, as it pertains to exercise can be described as being attune to your body, sensations and energy while being aware of thoughts and emotions as they develop, without judging anything or anyone, including ourselves.

### WHY BE MINDFUL?

The purpose is to use our awareness of our body and thoughts to have enjoyable, safe and beneficial exercise. Regular exercise or 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week, has long been touted as a key factor of healthy living, especially to decrease risk of chronic diseases, like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. So, practicing mindfulness could help eliminate issues or thoughts that often act as barriers to a healthier life.

### HOW TO BE MINDFUL

Take a moment to scan your body and then be flexible with the goals of that workout. Do you have aches or pains? Do you feel great? Remember, exercise should not be self-torture. Exercise is self-care. You are doing something great for yourself by simply moving, but a high-impact activity or lifting heavy weight might not be the best option for you right now. Make the best choice for you after listening to your body.

Many of us have jobs where sitting is very common, and our spines, shoulders, hips have learned to curve and tilt because we are not actively using our muscles to align and keep them straight. We need proper posture during exercise and everyday activities to prevent injury.

Choose a way to focus on your breath. You might feel your chest or abdomen expand as you breathe. You might feel the air hit the back of your nostrils. Breathing is a constant in life and we rarely notice it. Focusing on breathing especially with our movements has a tremendous centering effect and can help us throughout our workout. For example, for brisk walking, try inhaling for every 2 or 3 steps, then exhale for 2 steps; find the best breathing pattern for you.

As with any task, we become distracted or our mind might wander during exercise. This happens all the time to everyone, but part of mindfulness is about being present in the moment. So, without scolding yourself, return your attention to your movement or your breathing pattern, or both. This could help prevent injury and make exercise more a time of mindfulness and focus.



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AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

Remind yourself that exercise is self-care. You are doing something great by simply moving.

Before and during exercise, scan your body for aches or tightness. Assess your body and be flexible with the day's fitness goals.

Being aware of your posture can help prevent pain and injuries.

Focus on your breath and create a pattern with your movements. While walking, try inhaling for 3 steps and exhaling for 2-3 steps. This aids performance and creates a form of moving meditation.

