

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

Our bodies and our minds are not always aligned. In fact, a recent Harvard study published in Science demonstrates that our minds wander away from our task at hand approximately 47% of the time.

So, even though your body is here, your mind may be anywhere... drifting to the past (maybe a conversation you had earlier today), or to the future (perhaps you are thinking about your pressing to-do list).

There are many ways that we can bring out attention to the present moment. One of the gateways is through our senses. If you like, you can try it right now, wherever you happen to be...

Begin by bringing your attention to your *sense of sight*. Take a few moments to just look around, and really notice your surroundings, as if seeing this space for the first time...

Now shift your attention to your *sense of hearing*. It might help to close your eyes, as you notice sounds that are nearby ... and sounds that are far away ...

Now bring your attention to your body, and your *sense of touch*. Perhaps you notice your feet touching the floor. If you are sitting, you can bring your attention to the points where your body is making the most contact with the chair. You might even notice the air on your skin ...

And finally, take a few moments to focus on your *breath*. There's no need to change your breathing in any way. Just feel the air as it enters your nose or your mouth, notice the subtle movements in your body as your lungs fill and empty, and notice sensations as your exhale.

How was that to use your senses to bring yourself more fully into this moment?

There are various reactions to taking part in mindfulness exercises. Perhaps you found it *challenging* to keep your mind from wandering. Maybe, instead, it was *relaxing*. Some people think they should achieve a particular state, and feel *concerned* when they do not.

Whatever your experience, Kabat-Zinn (Mindfulness-Based Stressed Reduction founder) explains, "Mindfulness is not about getting anywhere else - it's about being where you are and knowing it."



<http://sites.uci.edu/mindfulhs>