

10 Easy Ways You Can Fit Mindfulness into Your Busy Life

Being present is the only way to enjoy life to the fullest. These realistic tips turn everyday activities into opportunities to be mindful.



Are you living in the present?

The idea of being mindful—being present, being more conscious of life as it happens—may seem contradictory to those who are used to sacrificing living for pursuing their goals, but cultivating mindfulness will help you achieve your goals and enjoy life more. In fact, you're more productive when you're mindful, among other science-backed benefits.



But more importantly, being present is undoubtedly the only way to enjoy life to the fullest. By being mindful, you enjoy your food more, you enjoy friends and family more, you enjoy anything you're doing more. Anything. Even things you might think are drudgery or boring, such as housework, can be amazing if you are truly present.

Try it: Wash dishes or sweep or cook, and remain fully present. It takes practice, but it's incredible.

1. Do one thing at a time



Single-task, don't multi-task. When you're pouring water, just pour water. When you're eating, just eat. When you're bathing, just bathe.

Don't try to knock off a few tasks while eating or bathing or driving. Zen proverb: "When walking, walk. When eating, eat."



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2. Act slowly and deliberately



You can do one task at a time, but also rush that task. Instead, take your time, and move slowly. Make your actions deliberate, not rushed and random. It takes practice, but it helps you focus on the task.

3. Do less



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Don't try to knock off a few tasks while eating or bathing or driving. Zen proverb: "When walking, walk. When eating, eat."

4. Stop worrying about the future



Become more aware of your thinking. Are you constantly worrying about the future? Learn to recognize when you're doing this, and then practice bringing yourself back to the present. Just focus on what you're doing, right now. Enjoy the present moment.

5. When you're talking to someone, pay attention



How many of us have spent time with someone but have been thinking about what we need to do in the future? Or thinking about what we want to say next, instead of really listening to that person? Instead, focus on being present, on really listening, on really enjoying your time with that person.

6. Put space between things



Related to the "Do less" rule, but it's a way of managing your schedule so that you always have time to complete each task. Don't schedule things close together. Instead, leave room between things on your schedule.

That gives you a more relaxed schedule, and leaves space in case one task takes longer than you planned.

7. Spend at least five minutes each day doing nothing



Just sit in silence. Become aware of your thoughts. Focus on your breathing. Notice the world around you. Become comfortable with the silence and stillness. It'll do you a world of good—and just takes five minutes!

8. Eat slowly and savour your food



Food can be crammed down our throats in a rush, but where's the joy in that? Savour each bite, slowly, and really get the most out of your food.

Interestingly, you'll eat less this way, and digest your food better as well.

9. Live slowly and savour your life



Just as you would savour your food by eating it more slowly, do everything this way. Slow down and savour each and every moment. Tune into the sights and sounds and awaken your senses to the world around you.

10. Make cleaning and cooking become meditation



Cooking and cleaning are often seen as drudgery, but actually they are both great ways to practice mindfulness, and can be great rituals performed each day. If cooking and cleaning seem like boring chores to you, try doing them as a form of meditation. Put your entire mind into those tasks, concentrate, and do them slowly and completely. It could change your entire day (as well as leave you with a cleaner house).

The most important thing is to keep practicing. When you get frustrated, just take a deep breath. When you ask yourself, "What should I do now, Self?" The answer is, "keep practicing."