

Mindfulness Matters

Does your brain ever feel crowded with thoughts? *“Did I remember my homework? Will I be late for the bus? Why didn’t my friend sit next to me in class?”* Having too much on your mind can be overwhelming. You might feel stressed and scattered. When you feel this way, mindfulness can help.

Being mindful means paying attention to what’s happening now. It means slowing down, taking your time, and focusing on what you are doing. Being mindful can help you feel calm and stress less.

There are several ways you can practice being mindful. One of the most helpful things to try is mindful breathing. To breathe mindfully, first you need to find a quiet place to relax. Then, breathe slowly in and out of your nose. As you do, notice your breaths. Does the air feel cool or warm? Which parts of your body move as you breathe? Slow down and keep your thoughts focused on your breath.

Walking in nature is another way to be mindful. Spending time in nature can reduce stress. While walking, you can pay attention to what you see, hear, smell, and touch.

Some people find that keeping a gratitude journal helps them to be more mindful. They write down what they are most thankful for each day to stay focused on the present and the positive. Other people keep worry boxes.



They write their worries on pieces of paper and shut them in the box. Once the thought is on the paper, they try not to let it enter their mind again.

Mindfulness can take many forms. Practicing yoga, doing a puzzle, or baking a cake can all be mindful activities. The key is to slow down and pay attention to what you are doing. Crafts like knitting, painting and origami can also be done in a calm way.

The next time you are feeling overwhelmed, take some time to practice mindfulness. The more you try it, the better you will be at staying in the present moment. As your mindfulness increases watch your stress melt away!



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a meaning of mindfulness?
 - a. Slowing down
 - b. Taking your time
 - c. Focusing on what you are doing
 - d. Doing two things at once

2. What do you do with a gratitude journal?
 - a. Write what you did that day
 - b. Write your worries
 - c. Write what you are thankful for
 - d. Write letters to your friends

3. Why would you pay attention to what you can see and hear while walking?
 - a. So you don't trip
 - b. To stay focused on what you are doing
 - c. To help you think about what you need to do later
 - d. To watch out for bears

4. Can running be a mindful activity?
 - a. Yes, if you slow down and pay attention
 - b. No, it's too fast
 - c. No, it's too much exercise
 - d. Yes, if you use the time to think about your homework

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a meaning of mindfulness?
 - a. Slowing down
 - b. Taking your time
 - c. Focusing on what you are doing
 - d. Doing two things at once**
2. What do you do with a gratitude journal?
 - a. Write what you did that day
 - b. Write your worries
 - c. Write what you are thankful for**
 - d. Write letters to your friends
3. Why would you pay attention to what you can see and hear while walking?
 - a. So you don't trip
 - b. To stay focused on what you are doing**
 - c. To help you think about what you need to do later
 - d. To watch out for bears
4. Can running be a mindful activity?
 - a. Yes, if you slow down and pay attention**
 - b. No, it's too fast
 - c. No, it's too much exercise
 - d. Yes, if you use the time to think about your homework