Mindfulness practices do more than help lower stress levels in the moment. They can also increase your ability to filter out distracting stimuli and focus on the task at hand, prevent anxiety and depression, and boost feelings of self-worth. We’ve put together some easy ways to kickstart your mindfulness practice that if done regularly can help you far beyond those moments of stress. Try any of the following to tune into your inner wisdom and start thriving.

This simple acronym can be used as a handy guide:

T: Thankfulness
H: Humor
R: Rest
I: Inspiration (and Expiration)
V: Visualize
E: Empathy
T: Thankfulness

Practicing gratitude toward the things in your life is a simple way to kickstart your mindfulness practice. And research shows that acknowledging the things that you’re thankful for can boost feelings of happiness. The best part? You can feel the positive effects even if you don’t share your gratitude with anyone else.

- For a regular morning or evening practice, think of all the things you feel grateful for (or 3-5 per day) no matter how small. Either write them down in a journal or just think about them. Sharing them with someone else is not necessary but can help solidify them in your mind.
- Create a “Tadah” list of your victories: review these successes (no matter how small) on the way home from work.
- Keep a token like a smooth stone in your pocket or on your desk — when you feel it or look at it, take note of what you’re thankful for.

H: Humor

There is so much healing in laughter and lightening up. Humor can diffuse stressful situations and strengthen social bonds. Have a regular practice of laughing or looking for the humor in life.

R: Rest

Getting enough sleep and taking “brain breaks” throughout the day help restore and recharge our brains and our bodies. They are also essential for building our resilience to stressors.

Tips for Better Sleep:

- If you wake up in the middle of the night with work or your to-do list on your mind, have a pad of paper by your bedside for a “brain dump.” Write down all of these thoughts on your list and then put the piece of paper in a drawer or out of sight.
- To increase the amount of sleep you get, start going to bed 15 minutes earlier for a few days, then add another 15 minutes, and so on, until you are at your desired bedtime.
- Make your bedroom a serene place only associated with relaxing activities. Limiting time on any type of electronic device that emits blue light is also important to avoid disrupting your body’s natural circadian rhythm.
- Getting the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity every week can help you sleep better and feel more alert during the day.
How to Take a “Brain Break”

After a period of intense focus that lasts anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour, take a brain break. Get up and stretch, go for a short walk, connect with a co-worker socially, listen to music, close your eyes for a few minutes, meditate, or eat mindfully without distractions.

I: Inspiration

Restore a sense of calm and reconnect with your body by taking one minute to focus on your breathing (yes, it only needs to take a minute!).

There are lots of different breathing techniques you can use to elicit the relaxation response. Try the one below or experiment with different techniques until you find the one (or ones) that works best for you.

Circle Breath

This breathing exercise can be great for individuals who experience discomfort holding their breath or exhaling for a long period of time. Imagine that your breathing is like riding a Ferris Wheel, starting at the bottom as you begin your inhale. As you imagine coming to the top of the Ferris Wheel, slowly transition without pausing to an exhale, so that your breath is as continuous as possible. Keep riding the Ferris Wheel with your breath, slowly, for as long as you’d like.

V: Visualize

Our minds work in images. But we often forget that we have the power to choose the images we wish to see!

For this mindfulness activity, visualize how you would like a challenging situation to go — just like the way an Olympic diver runs through the dive in their mind. This helps to counteract fear-based thoughts, calm you down, and set you up for success.

- This process is often called guided imagery. According to Headspace, “guided imagery is a focused practice that involves each of the five senses to ignite positive healing messages throughout the mind and body.” By visualizing scenarios in your mind, you start to turn on the other senses in the body and experience them as if they were real. This allows you to associate positive feelings with an event and prepare you for tough situations.
Empathy toward others is the underpinning of a collaborative and supportive environment. But what about empathy toward yourself? According to *Psychology Today*, “people who have self-compassion also have greater social connectedness, emotional intelligence, happiness, and overall life satisfaction.” All it takes is a few minutes every day to stop negative thoughts in their tracks and start feeling the positive effects of self-love.

- Imagine talking to yourself like you would talk to a friend or a child, in a soothing and encouraging way.
- Ask yourself, “how can I be kind to myself in this moment?” Maybe it’s saying no to that request of your time, forgiving yourself for making a mistake, or maybe it’s putting your self-care on the top of your to do list.
- Remember, it’s ok to get support when you need it — you don’t have to do it alone.
- View mistakes as learning opportunities. More growth happens as a result of mistakes than successes. That’s why Thomas Edison never viewed any unsuccessful experiment as a failure; they were all necessary steps to his ultimate inventions.
- Ready to try it? Practice this loving and kindness meditation: “May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe, may I be at peace.” You can also extend it to others by adding “may you be happy,” and so on.

What helps you thrive?

Your mindfulness practice can be whatever you want it to be. Incorporate the things that nourish your soul and fill your life with joy. Giving these things the space they deserve will help you feel more calm, collected, and successful every day.

Want to bring the benefits of mindfulness into the workplace? Check out our beginner’s guide to encouraging mindful moments during any busy workday.

Get the Guide!