

PAUSE WHERE YOU ARE: 2ND EDITION

STROLLS FOR WELL-BEING AT ISU: *Press Pause & Take a Break...*

One of the keys to a successful mindfulness practice is flexibility and a variety of experiences. Many people do not have time to go somewhere for a formal 10-minute practice. This *Pause Where You Are* list offers options that you can explore when you are stressed, overwhelmed or simply need a break. They are designed to be done in a few minutes or seconds from anywhere— at work, home, in a parking lot, waiting in line or anywhere you can *Pause Where You Are*.

Mindfulness apps: Mindfulness apps are a great resource. A few to start with are: Insight Timer, Mindful.org, Healthy Minds Innovation, Greater Good at Berkeley and Mindfulness Center at Brown.

Connect with a sound: Put on music or listen to sounds of nature like waves, a gentle breeze, rain or other soothing sounds. You could also pick up on the naturally occurring sounds around you (the hum of an appliance, the sound of traffic or the bustle of a workplace). Close your eyes and tune in to your chosen sound. Stay with the sound, returning to it when a distraction happens, and perhaps notice how you breathe along with it.

Mindful listening: Pick a song, close your eyes and listen closely to the music. Follow the lyrics, notice the different instruments or take in the song as a whole experience. If you have heard the song before, did you notice anything new? Alternatively, pick a song that has a repetitive lyric, phrase or melody line. Count how many times you hear the reoccurring detail.

Breathing colors: Choose two different colors, one to breathe in and one to breathe out. Blue works well for the in-breath, since it matches the cool feeling of the air coming in. Red works well for the out-breath, as it matches the warm feeling of the air leaving your body. However, you can choose the colors you want for the reasons you want. Close your eyes and pair each color— breathe in and breathe out.

Body scan: Scan your body from top to bottom. Then observe, describe and note areas of tension and discomfort. Gently dismiss judgments that arise and take a deep breath into each area of the body where this discomfort exists. Do not have an agenda about changing how these areas feel, but do notice differences that happen as you continue to breathe and connect. Also, notice areas of your body that feel relaxed and comfortable. Breathe into these areas too.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 senses: To increase your awareness and ground yourself in the present moment, list five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell and one thing you taste.

Categories: Pick a category such as animals or foods and list as many items from that category as possible. This brings you into the present moment and can release stress.

Attention to small moments: Small moments in our lives include those that we don't typically notice and those we take for granted. A small moment may be having a cup of coffee or a cool glass of water, spending a moment with a child or pet, or performing an everyday activity that goes by without our attention. Enjoyment, peace and serenity in life happen in the small moments. Several times in a day, orient yourself to the small moments happening that you might otherwise miss.

Breathing: We all breathe, and we can all breathe more effectively. Our breath is our anchor and an excellent way to center ourselves. Take time to breathe mindfully in and out. Stay focused on the sensation of the air coming into your air passages and lungs, holding it, and then letting it out. Use a mantra, such as "in" as you breathe in and "out" as you breathe out, or count each breath from 1 to 10, starting over when you reach 10 or lose count.

10 details: At any place, pause, observe and describe 10 details you would not have otherwise noticed.

Mindfulness exercises from: Pederson, L., & Pederson, C.S. (2020). *The expanded dialectical behavior therapy skills training manual* (2nd. ed.). PESI Publishing & Media.

<https://www.wellbeing.iastate.edu/mindfulness/strolls-home>