

Here are some ways you can practice mindfulness:

### 1. Being in Nature

Besides all the physical benefits like exposure to fresh air and antioxidants from trees and plants, being in nature is a great way to practice mindfulness and reduce stress. Many people find that nature raises their appreciation for and awareness of life. After all, it's hard to look at a beautiful, blooming flower and not feel grateful for this beauty. We are genetically programmed to find trees, plants, and bodies of water engrossing, which puts us in a relaxed and present state of mind. Numerous studies have shown that spending time in nature has a positive effect on our bodies by reducing cortisol levels and lowering heart rate and blood pressure.

### 2. Dancing

Another way to pull yourself into the present moment and connect with your heart is through mindful movement. When we dance, do yoga, or enjoy light exercise, we connect to our bodies and our true selves in that moment. In particular, moving our bodies to music without any thought allows us to practice non-judgment and heart-centered joy. This can be difficult for some people. The idea of dancing can trigger insecurities and feelings of self-consciousness. If that is the case, dancing can be done in privacy, maybe even with headphones on.

### 3. Spending Time with Animals

Playing with our furry friends is a sure way to become fully present. Animals naturally live in the present moment without judgment. They are not thinking about what they will do tomorrow or what happened yesterday. They live for our loving attention and freely give their love to us unconditionally. Their ability to be completely present helps us embrace that state of mind as well.

### 4. Meditating

Practicing meditation is a form of practicing mindfulness. There are many kinds of meditation including silent meditation, guided meditation, breath



awareness, body scanning, visualization, and chanting or mantra-based meditation. Also, spending time in prayer.

If you want to try meditation any of these might work for you. Find a meditation class near you or download a meditation app to your phone and try it out. Also, there are many meditation recordings available on the internet. Meditation is not for everyone, so keep an open mind when trying it. But be sure to give it some time, like any new skill you can't improve if you only try it once. Have fun with it and designate a place in your house or yard for your meditation space. Add pillows and a soft blanket, a candle, a bell, or chime—anything that will make it a special space.

### 5. Observing Your Thoughts

Paying attention to our thoughts is also very important when it comes to quieting our mind and living more in the present moment. This is when we become the observer of our thoughts instead of being lost in them. Are you thinking about the past or future? Are you just making stories up in your mind about what “might” happen or “shoulda-coulda-woulda” happened? Try paying attention to the chatter in your mind and journal what you notice about your thoughts. Journaling is a great way to become aware of where your thoughts are most of the day!

### 6. Relaxing Routines

Taking a soothing bath, or doing a relaxing skin or body care regimen, will naturally slow down those “autopilot” thoughts. Water has a calming effect on us because it triggers our parasympathetic nervous system. Once we feel less stress in our bodies, our mind slows down. Furthermore, pleasant sensations like a cooling face mask or scented lotion engage our senses and bring us back to our body in the present moment.

### 7. Finding Your Flow

Try engaging in activities that put you in a “flow state.” This is any activity that encourages complete immersion and absorption in said activity. When we're in flow state, we often lose track of time and simply engage with what we are



doing. Many different activities can activate our flow state, such as some form of art or writing, exercise, playing or listening to music, as well as gardening and cooking. Just think of any activities where you lose all sense of time and go “into the zone.” By becoming fully immersed and energetically focused, we are able to connect with our heart and experience complete enjoyment in what we are doing.

## 8. Reflecting

Allowing for quiet time to reflect is another great practice. You can do this while sitting in your favorite spot that you created. Just spend some time reflecting on what is most important to you without any judgment or criticism toward yourself.

