



DID YOU KNOW?

Being Mindful Can Prevent and Manage Stress

“Mindfulness” – being aware and present in the moment – can help us take care of ourselves and lower our stress.

Being mindful increases our ability to pay attention, lowers our blood pressure, and makes it less likely that we will get sick. Practicing mindfulness also helps calm our brain and body when stressful things happen in our life.

It can be hard to find time in our busy lives to be mindful. The good news is that even 2 – 10 minutes per day of a mindfulness activity can help. It is never too late to start.



Mindfulness involves focusing on the present moment, whatever it may bring, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. When we are fully present in the moment, without judgment, we can be more thoughtful, compassionate, and open-minded about the best course of action in that moment.

Everyday Practices

Here are some everyday ways to incorporate mindfulness into our daily lives to help prevent and lower stress:

- Be mindful with the people in your life.** Practice giving your friends, family, and co-workers your undivided attention for 10 or 15 minutes.
- Consider practices that combine mindfulness with physical activity, such as yoga and tai chi.
- Check out our Mindfulness resources at ACEsAware.org/ManageStress

- Practice mindful breathing techniques:**

- **Belly breathing:** Put your hand on your belly and take a big deep breath so that your belly goes up, and then with a long slow



Pick a time every day to practice **2-10 minutes of mindfulness.**

breath feel your belly go back down. Kids can do this too!

- **4, 7, 8**

breathing:

Breathe in

for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7 and exhale for a count of 8. Do this three times a day.

- Use a daily mantra or affirmation.** Repeating phrases such as “I am strong”, “I am enough”, or “I am grateful” can be a powerful way to focus on what you need to be your best self every day. You can make up your own or look up phrases that speak to you.





- Take a mindful walk.** Slow down and engage all of your senses. Smell flowers and plants, listen to the birds, and touch different textures (such as the bark of trees and smooth and rough rocks).



- Eat mindfully.** Sit down and enjoy the flavors and textures, and focus on chewing each bite. Before giving in to a craving, pause and take some breaths; ask yourself, is it what I really need at this moment?

Sometimes We Need *a Little* Extra Support

Mindfulness is a way to be present with our pain, grief, anger, and stressful life experiences with self-compassion and without judgment. Often when we are present with our emotions and experiences we can listen to what our body is trying to tell us and what we truly need in that moment.

It can help to:

- Practice mindfulness at the same time every day. Then when any kind of stressful event happens, you will have already built up your “mindfulness muscle”. You can use mindfulness to calm yourself down and think clearly about the best course of action in that stressful moment.



When you or people you care about are hitting a little bump in the road or are feeling overwhelmed, it is normal to feel emotional and to not think clearly.

Sometimes We Need *a Lot* of Extra Support

When you are going through an extra tough time, there are programs that can help. Check out [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress) for more about the following programs:



- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy:** A type of therapy that incorporates mindfulness practices.
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR):** An eight-week course that has been proven to decrease stress and help people in the midst of stressful times.
- Biofeedback:** Involves practicing breathing techniques, mindfulness, or another calming strategy while being monitored by a device that may show your heart rate, breathing rate, or blood pressure. You can visually see on the monitor how these calming strategies impact your own heart rate in real time. This can be a very powerful tool in helping you connect with your body and see healing in action.



FOR MORE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS:

Visit [ACEsAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress) or
Talk to your health care provider