

# R.E.A.L Goals<sup>SM</sup>: Mindfulness Activities

(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)

**Example:** I will complete at least one mindfulness activity at least four days a week.

## The benefits:

- Mindfulness is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
- Practicing mindfulness activities can lead to a better quality of life by decreasing stress and emotional reactivity, increasing focus and memory, improving sleep, and allowing for better management of chronic pain.
- Being mindful can also help protect an individual from stressful conflicts in a relationship and increase compassion, empathy, and kindness toward others.

## Try these mindfulness activities:

- Meditate
- Yoga or stretching
- Forgive yourself
- Listen to music, a book, or a podcast
- Practice breathing exercises
- Focus on being present in the moment
- Go for a walk
- Work on a puzzle or other creative activities
- Spend time journaling
- Search "Mindfulness Activities" on WebMD
- Get out and spend time in nature

## Incorporate mindfulness into everyday activities:

- **When you are doing the dishes**, savor the feeling of the warm water on your hands, the look of the bubbles, and the sounds of the pans clinking on the bottom of the sink.
- **When you brush your teeth**, feel your feet on the floor, the brush in your hand, your arm moving up and down.
- **While you're driving**, listen to something soothing or turn off the radio. Imagine your spine growing tall; find the halfway point between relaxing your hands and gripping the wheel too tightly. Bring your attention back to where you and your car are in space whenever you notice your mind wandering.
- **When you exercise**, turn off all screens and focus on your breath and where your feet are in space as you move. If you are outside, take a look around and enjoy the scenery as your body moves.

## Body scan

A beginner may find it helpful to do a body scan, a targeted meditation technique that encourages you to relax your entire body bit by bit. Not only does this help focus your brain, but it also lets you relieve discomfort. To practice, find a comfortable position, seated or lying down, and close your eyes.

- Start from the top of your head. Become aware of any sensations that you feel, and try to clear your mind of anything else. When a thought comes, refocus on your breathing.
- Move down to your neck and shoulders. Notice any stress you may be holding there and release it.

- Continue toward your arms, to your elbows, wrists, and hands. Notice how they feel resting on your legs. Are your hands warm or cool?
- Bring your attention to your stomach. Feel your breath.
- Notice your hips. Where are they resting? Do you feel tension there?
- Work your way down to the knees, ankles, and feet. Where are your feet resting? Do they feel warm or cool?
- When you have scanned your body, observe how your breath feels. Notice its speed and depth. Find a consistent rhythm.

## Mindfulness resources

- Apps: Headspace, Calm, or Ten Percent Happier
- Podcasts: Happier, Life on Purpose, or The Daily Meditation

Explore more [Real Goals and Supplemental Resources](#)

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