



Concussed.

## Mindfulness Exercises

Provided by Katherine (Kado) Simmons

Mindfulness is a state of being present, attuned, and self-aware. Through practicing mindfulness, we work towards living our present moment experiences and allowing them to unfold without judgment or criticism. Mindfulness is the state of awareness that we cultivate when we notice things exactly as they are, without trying to push them away or change them.

### 4 Breathing Exercises (~4 min each, choose 1-2)

*Begin each exercise with a few easy breaths. Notice the way your inhale and exhale occur naturally.*

- *Matching inhales and exhales*  
Find a count that works for you. 1-2-3-4 in, 1-2-3-4 out  
Repeat for 2 minutes  
Hold your breath at the top for as long as is comfortable; regular exhale  
Repeat for 1 minute  
Hold your breath at the bottom; regular inhale  
Repeat for 1 minute
- *Lengthening exhales*  
Find a count that works for you. 1-2-3-4 in  
Make your exhale 2 counts longer. 1-2-3-4-5 out  
Repeat for 2 minutes  
Make your exhale 2 counts longer. 1-2-3-4- in, 1-2-3-4-5-6 out  
Repeat for 2 minutes
- *Box breathing*  
Find a count that works for you. 1-2-3-4 in  
Hold your breath at the top for 1-2-3-4  
Exhale 1-2-3-4  
Hold your breath at the bottom for 1-2-3-4  
Repeat for 2-4 minutes
- *Three-section breathing*  
Breathe in naturally  
Exhale in three times, evenly  
Repeat for 2 minutes  
Breathe in three times, evenly  
Exhale naturally  
Repeat for 2 minutes

## Yoga Sequence (~5 min)

Find a comfortable seated position

Sit well.

Allow your muscles to relax into your seat.

Soften the muscles and bones in your face.

Take a few easy breaths.

*Option to insert abbreviated breathing exercise here - 30 seconds*

On your next inhale, lift your chin up toward the ceiling.

On your exhale, drop your chin to your chest.

Repeat x 2

On your next exhale, start to make a big, slow circle with your neck.

Inhale as you lift, exhale as you drop.

Reverse the direction of your circle.

After a few more circles, let your eyes look forward.

*Keep this breathing pattern*

Reach your arms down, out, and up over your head,

Inhale as you stretch them up towards the ceiling with palms facing each other.

Imagine you are holding a big beach ball.

Reach them out and down, exhaling.

Repeat x 2

*Return to your breathing pattern*

At the end of your third reach, leave the right arm up

Stretch the left hand down towards the floor

Reach up and over with your right hand

Stretch open your right side

Inhale back up with both arms, hold your beach ball

Stretch the right hand down towards the floor

Reach up and over with your left hand

Stretch open your left side

Inhale back up with both arms, hold your beach ball

Repeat x 2

## Mindfulness Exercise (~10 min)

I invite you to close your eyes, or find a soft gaze. For the next few minutes, we will hold space to transition from the business of our day into our time together. Let us begin by bringing steadiness to our bodies. If you are finding that your body is not in a position to bring steadiness, I invite you to move your body and shift into a position that allows you to do so. For some, this may start with placing both feet on the floor. An awareness of lengthening the spine. A focus on dropping the shoulders. For some, it is unclenching their jaw.

Take a full breath in and out to gather your attention. Let yourself breathe naturally, observing the rhythm of the inhale and exhale. Once in a while it may feel good to sigh, or maybe to take in some extra breath. Whatever the flow, let your breath become your backdrop to the present moment. If you find your mind wandering at any point during this meditation, gently take notice of where it went and then, without judgment, return to the rhythm of your breath.

*(Pause)* Take a moment to observe the boundary of your body. Where does your body touch the surface of what is supporting you? Notice the surface that connects to the back of your head, your upper back, your lower back, your bum, your legs. Where do your feet connect? Perhaps if not to a surface, then to air.

Bring the same awareness to the front side of your body. Instead of contact with the ground, imagine the boundary created between the air and your skin. The top of your feet, moving up your legs, the front of your abdomen and chest, the fronts of your arms, the front of your head, the features of your face, the tip of your nose. Feel the surface of the entire front of your body.

Now imagine these boundaries connecting, creating one, dynamic outline of your body.

And now imagine the outline shifting an inch away from the surfaces of your body.

Then a foot away. Then six feet.

Now the outline is as large as the room you are in. And it can keep traveling. Imagine it reaching the tops of the trees, the mountaintops, the stratosphere, then higher still.

Imagine it encompassing the entire surface of the Earth. The surrounding planets. Around the sun. The solar system. Then the galaxy, and breadth of the Milky Way, and on and on as far as your imagination can take it, eventually expanding and stretching so far that it is no longer a boundary or outline, but an extension of yourself, woven into the matter that makes up the stars and the Universe.

Feel your body taking in breath and letting it go.

*(Pause)* And begin to return. Back towards the Earth, back towards the oceans and mountains, cityscapes, to somewhere just miles away. To the edges of the room. To six feet away. To inches away. To the boundary of your skin, to where it meets the air and the floor.

Take a moment to notice the state of your mind. Acknowledge whatever is most present, and welcome this state as an ephemeral part of you.

When appropriate for your own body and mind, I welcome you to wiggle your toes, to wiggle your fingers, and when you are ready, to open your eyes.

## Reflection Questions

1. How do you feel after doing the exercise?
2. Did you find the exercise to be challenging? If so, in what ways? If not, what about it felt accessible?
3. Where do you have the most sensation in your body? Where do you have the least?
4. When might implementing a mindfulness exercise in your day to day life be helpful?
5. What questions do you have about mindfulness and meditation?

Feedback and Sharing with Concussed.

I would love to read any reflections you would be willing to share! Don't hesitate to reach out: [concussedcait@gmail.com](mailto:concussedcait@gmail.com)

Thank you for your participation! Go Bears! - Cait Ward