

MEDITATION-AND STRESS-AND-MINDFULNESS



The benefits of mindfulness are big time plentiful, yet for all of us sometimes, with all the advice on how to live a more reflective life in a very busy world can seem contradictory, with all the gurus offering enlightenment through complex and lengthy exercises and routines. The fortunate truth is that you can truly reach a state of gentle meditation without the need for prolonged spells of sitting still while all the daily to-do list screams for your attention. As you know, those must-do chores will never go away, so why not combine all of them with a healthy dose of mindfulness and experience the very best of both worlds?



Teacher, consultant, and therapist Kathryn Lovewell is a huge, passionate believer in the many benefits of approaching routine activities with thoughtful love and attention (and so am I). She delivers a training program in Mindful Self-Compassion, where the participants are encouraged to practice mindfulness in their daily lives-essentially looking at everyday tasks and responsibilities in a new and different light. Things like making your afternoon cup of tea or coffee or taking that morning shower are just perfect, she says.



It does sound easy enough, however where do you start? During this course Kathryn invites participants to get in the zone by choosing one of the activities they do every day. Pick something you would normally do without thinking, she says. Bring it to your mind and visualize yourself doing it. 100% fully immerse yourself in it, pay close attention to all of your senses and really savor the experience. This could be anything from you eating your lunch to washing your hands-nothing is too mundane.



There are indeed many benefits-mental, emotional, and physical-to be had by you practicing this method. In just a few minutes the mind will become calmer, your stress hormones are reduced, and your body relaxes. By you focusing on the here and now you will move away from ruminating thoughts of

situations that may be getting you down or causing you some anxiety. This will in turn help to distance yourself from any unpleasant emotions that these situations may be causing. And by you embedding this new approach in your normal day-to-day routine you will establish a new healthy habit that will also bring the benefits of mindfulness.

Now it is your turn

First, start by choosing an activity that you do every day. Try to keep it simple, it could be washing up after lunch or dinner, or preparing an afternoon snack. Here I am using the example of hanging the laundry.

(1)

* **Breathe** – Breathe-in, breathe-out before you get started take 4 deep breaths filling the lungs with air pushing out your belly before slow exhaling through your mouth as though you are gently blowing out a candle.

* **Feel** – Notice the shape your arms make as you take each one of your garment out of the laundry basket and hang them on line. Is it cold or warm?

(2)

* **Observe** – Watch how the shirts, t-shirts, and even the socks are being afflicted by the wind .

Now look all around. What else is going on in your yard?

Are there any leaves on the ground? Are there cloud in the sky?

Any birds in the trees? Or any wildlife around you.

(3)

***Smell** – Can you make out the fragrance of your fabric conditioner

and what other scents are competing with it?

***Taste** – Is there any dew that's fallen onto your lips?

What sensation does it bring?

***Listen** – What sounds can you hear? Is there traffic noise in the background?

Tune in to what's around you.

***Breathe** – Finish with 4 long, slow, and deep breaths as before.

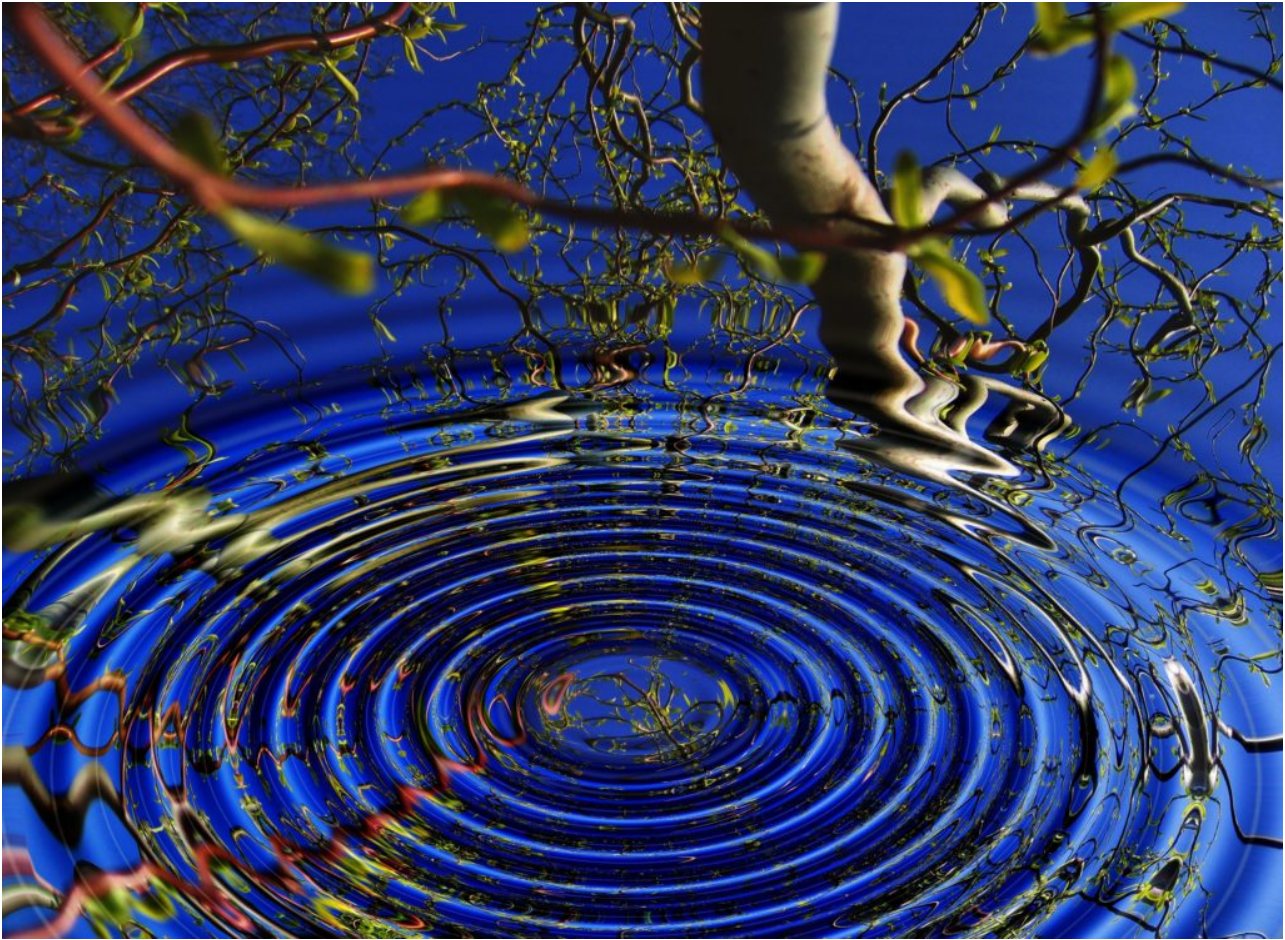
Reflect on everything that you experience.



Miss Ruth Atkinson, a bank employee and a mother of two, has taken the mindful approach to washing. I've always been quite particular when washing my dishes, she says. I like to always do it properly, but have recently found it to be particularly therapeutic. I always start with putting on my special rubber gloves that I wash dishes with, I like to soak up the fragrance of the washing-up liquid while swirling the water. I'm quite methodical, always washing items in a particular order and working through from cutlery up to pans, as I go, lining everything up. It feels so soothing and satisfying.



Even if, the family are in the kitchen it is something I always love to do in silence. It's become a somewhat of a ritual and I always finish by burning some of my favorite incense. It's as though I'm putting the kitchen to bed, after our evening meal, she says. My kitchen window looks out onto the garden, that my dad takes great pride in always keeping beautiful, and I regularly pause to take a good look at it. I so love noticing all the changes from day to day, last week it rained heavily one day, the flowers seemed more vibrant afterward. It was nice to chat to my dad later about what I had noticed. He seems to appreciate it, and that's a beautiful bonding experience between us in itself.



A soothing, lovely ritual, the beauty of nature, precious bonding time, with a chore ticked off. Almost makes you want to reach for those special rubber gloves, doesn't it? Follow this mindful approach to any of your life's routine tasks and in time my friends you may indeed notice yourself feeling calmer and less stressed, I did. My friends rather than seeing mindfulness as a complicated, time-consuming task to add to the to-do list, try to find a little time for reflection in your daily routine.

May you be always in good health, humbly your Paul Earl.

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META TITLE MEDITATION-AND STRESS-AND-MINDFULNESS

MEAT DESCRIPTION How to use MEDITATION-AND-MINDFULNESS to relieved STRESS