

# The Magic of Mindfulness



## Join the Wave and Change Your Life

- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- Increase energy and focus
- Enhance creativity, clarity and insight
- Respond more effectively in difficult situations

**10-day self-directed program**  
**Open to all employees**  
**February 21 – March 2, 2017**



Mindfulness (moment to moment awareness) is the foundation for creating resilience, balance, satisfaction and wellbeing. It is profoundly restorative and proven to have a substantial impact on all aspects of health. This 10-day program challenges you to learn about and practice this powerful yet simple way of being. To earn prizes, you must practice mindfulness for a total of at least 15 minutes a day every day for 10 days. Below are the five different mindfulness resources, including attached articles and short audio links, for this program.

- Mindful Eating
- Mindful Walking
- [Body Scan Relaxation](#)
- [Breath Meditation](#)
- [Mindful Check-In](#)

Participate with curiosity and without judgement. Complete and return Log and Prize form by March 10, 2017.

## Wellness Tip:

**“Mindfulness isn’t difficult. We just need to remember to do it.”**  
**Sharon Salzberg, *New York Times* best selling author and teacher**



# Mindful Walking



Any time you find yourself walking is a good time to practice mindfulness. For a casual walking practice, choose a place to walk where there won't be too many distractions and starts and stops. Begin walking and focus all your attention on what you are doing, noticing sensations as they arise. You can bring your attention to your feet, legs or body as a whole. When you find yourself drifting away from your focus, simply notice where your mind has gone and return to the walking.

You can even practice bringing mindfulness to the walking you do as you go about your life. Notice how often you are actually present for the experience of walking and how often you are lost in thought. Commit to walking up or down stairs mindfully or walking through the halls at work with awareness that you are walking. Bringing present moment awareness to walking during routine tasks and errands short-circuits the automatic pilot mode and can make our routine experiences more interesting and leave us calmer, less exhausted and even happier, as reported in research on the connection between focus and happiness.

You can also set aside time for a formal mindful walking meditation. Find a place where you can walk back and forth slowly for about 6 – 10 steps. Take a moment to close your eyes and feel your feet on the floor. You might even begin with a short body scan, moving your awareness from your head to

your feet, letting the focus on your body begin to quiet the mind. As your awareness comes back into your feet, shift your weight back and forth from one foot to the other, feeling the pressure and lightness and whatever other sensations arise. Then begin to walk with small steps. As you move each foot, bring full awareness to the soles of your feet. After a while, you might expand your awareness to the stages of walking – lifting, stepping and placing one foot and then the other. Notice and engage fully with the experience of walking. When you get to the end of your walking path, pause briefly, turn around, and bring full awareness to your next steps. Walk at whatever speed keeps you most present.

As you walk, try to let the thoughts and images that arise remain in the background. If you find yourself lost in a thought or emotion, just stop and bring your awareness back to your breath or feet and then resume walking. Remember that the practice is not about stopping thoughts, but about noticing when you've been carried away and coming back to the present moment.



# Mindful Eating

Practicing mindful eating is a powerful way to cultivate mindfulness. It helps you slow down and be able to savor the taste of your food and the experience of eating. Before you begin eating any meal or snack or drinking a beverage, take a few moments of silence and look at the food, noticing colors, shapes and all there is to notice about what is before you. You might sense the temperature of the food and smell the aroma.

As you begin to take a first bite or sip, bring full presence to the experience, noticing the taste, consistency, sensation in

your mouth, the urge to chew and the process of swallowing. Pay full attention to each piece of food you select from your plate and continue eating mindfully, all the way through the process of swallowing to actually feeling the sensation of the food becoming part of your body. Whenever your mind wanders, just gently bring it back to the process of eating.

Don't worry if this seems hard or you can only do this for a few moments. If this happens, just be aware of the feelings and thoughts, without judgment. Being curious and kind as you explore your habits around eating. When you are done, notice if your food tastes different or how the experience is different when eaten in this manner

# Magic of Mindfulness

With regular practice, the undesired conditions on the left can be replaced with desired ones on the right. It all starts with just 15 minutes a day and can lead to improved work performance, better health and wellbeing. Isn't it time for you to start practicing mindfulness?

## AT WORK AND HOME ARE YOU:

- easily distracted
- feeling stuck
- trouble thinking clearly
- worn down by tension
- difficulty making decisions
- irritable and easily annoyed
- overwhelmed



### Mindfulness Improves:

- focus
- stability
- cognitive function
- emotional regulation
- creativity/innovation
- flexible thinking
- memory
- communication skills

## DO YOU HAVE:

- high blood pressure
- difficulty sleeping
- chronic pain
- heart disease
- skin disorders
- diabetes
- headaches



### Mindfulness Helps:

- enhance overall health
- reduce medical symptoms

## DURING THE DAY DO YOU FEEL:

- stress
- low mood/depression
- anxiety
- feeling “just not right”
- out of balance
- disconnected
- exhausted



### Mindfulness Increases:

- resilience
- stress hardiness, calmness
- happiness
- sense of balance, engagement with life

# Magic of Mindfulness Log and Prize Form

Send completed form to Mary Harrington by  
March 10, 2017 at mharrington@mma.org or  
fax to 617-542-6513.

Record the number of minutes you participate in mindfulness activities each day. *To earn a prize, you must log at least a total of 15 minutes each day of the program.* You can accumulate minutes by doing body scan, breath meditation, mindful check in, mindful walking or mindful eating or any combination of the above. See page one for links to audio files. Articles are attached.

	Body scan	Breath meditation	Mindful check in	Mindful eating	Mindful walking	Total minutes
Sample: Feb 21	5 minutes		5 minutes		10 minutes	20 minutes
Feb 21						
Feb 22						
Feb 23						
Feb 24						
Feb 25						
Feb 26						
Feb 27						
Feb 28						
March 1						
March 2						

Total days accumulated at least 15 minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP TWO- Don't forget to give us your FEEDBACK!

Were you aware of what mindfulness was prior to this program? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, did this program help you to understand what mindfulness is? Explain \_\_\_\_\_

What did you find the most helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

What else would you like to learn? \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP THREE- Complete prize section and return this entire page to Mary Harrington at above location.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ MIIA/BCBS subscriber # \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

### Check which prize you prefer:

Please identify #1 and #2 your first choice and second choice in case your first is no longer available. Only MIIA/Blue Cross Blue Shield members are eligible for prizes

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chill watch                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Zen garden               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga mat               | <input type="checkbox"/> Wind chimes                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto tool kit                | <input type="checkbox"/> Back in Motion back wrap | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle repair kit     | <input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo cutting board       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stainless steel water bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> Salad to Go container    | <input type="checkbox"/> Soup to Go container   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit infused water bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye pillow                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fleece blanket           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cold weather face mask | <input type="checkbox"/> Pack it lunch sack         |