

*“Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment.”*

— Sogyal Rinpoche

**Mindfulness** improves emotional and physical health, reduces stress, and improves sleep. It can improve quality of life and optimize tissue repair during the day and at night. Awareness leads to mindfulness, which can facilitate a path towards a state of balance; the place where calm and relaxation are in equilibrium with sleep, active living, and optimal fitness. Daytime mindfulness activities can improve overall health and contribute to a healthy, deep rest. When less time is spent worrying, and focus is redirected from the past or future to the present, a path is opened for improved health and sleep.

**Mindfulness meditation** can be defined as focusing awareness on each moment, including the environment, as well as physical and emotional sensations. Mindfulness can assist with managing social relationships, economic concerns, and decision-making, as well as improving mental state.

*“Mindfulness is the aware, balanced acceptance of the present experience. It isn’t more complicated than that.*

*It is opening to or receiving the present moment, pleasant or unpleasant, just as it is, without either clinging to it or rejecting it.”* — Sylvia Boorstein

Mindfulness meditation often uses either slow, intentional breathing or imagery to help to focus the thoughts. In clinical studies, practicing mindfulness and/or mindfulness meditation before bed has led to benefits including:

- Reduced insomnia
- Deeper sleep
- Fewer episodes of wakefulness during the night
- Improved mood and resilience
- Greater daytime energy
- Less anxiety

## How to Get Started

- Select a quiet place where you can relax. Sit, stand, or lie down comfortably.
- Pay attention to the environment, listening to the sounds, smelling what is around you, and feeling the temperature of the room.



- Focus inward. Take several deep breaths, paying attention to how your body feels as you breathe. Let your eyes close as you become more relaxed.
- Scan your body and assess how you feel. Focus your awareness on the parts of your body that are tense or in pain. Breathe deeply and acknowledge the feeling, without judging it.
- If desired, you can imagine your body becoming heavier, more anchored to the earth.
- If desired, you can visualize a location that makes you particularly happy. That could be a natural setting, a vacation spot you remember fondly, or a place where something good happened in your life.



- Let the thoughts flow. If you have anxious or worried thoughts, let each occurrence be an opportunity to observe the thought and let it go. Rather than fighting the thoughts, imagine standing still and letting the thoughts flow around you. Bring your attention back to your breath.
- If you are concerned about losing track of time, set a timer.
- Practice mindfulness meditation before you get ready for bed. Perhaps meditate before you brush your teeth, or after shutting off your phone or computer, or as you lie in bed ready to fall asleep. Make mindfulness meditation part of your routine.

*“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”*

*—Hanh Nhat*