

Live Your Better Life Through Mindfulness

“I envision a day when mental exercise will be as much a part of our daily lives as physical exercise & personal hygiene.”

~Richard Davidson PhD (Centerhealthyminds.org)



Mindfulness Life's Superpower

We all need a superpower right now! Rapid change, job loss or disruption, stress, anxiety and fear, often lurking in the backs of our minds, have roared into the forefront of our lives. Whatever difficulties were present before are likely being magnified by the worldwide changes that COVID 19 has brought. **If you were to choose a couple things that will most help you at this time, we would recommend adequate sleep ([click here for tips on best sleep](#)) and practicing mindfulness.** Mindfulness won't change what is happening, but it will create much needed space between what is happening and how you react to it, **changing your perspective.**

Mindfulness is a new buzzword, but does it really matter in everyday life? The resounding answer is yes! Mindfulness has powerful results when used and can include improved:

- Immune function
- Mood
- Sleep
- Energy
- Living in the present moment
- Focus and memory
- Body awareness
- Relationships
- Happiness
- Calmness and relaxation
- Reflection on life
- Decreased judgmental attitudes

- Depression and anxiety
- Pain
- Impulsive reactions

And it's free! How does it work? Mindfulness works on your brain, actually changing its structure and chemistry over time ([click for more information on these brain functions and benefits](#)).

There are many types of mindfulness, but the **goal of all methods is to live mindfully**. This means that you are present in the moment, with the people, tasks, and experiences that are actually happening now. Mindfulness allows you to minimize the regrets of life that come from focusing on the past, as well as decrease the fear and anxiety that often occur when focusing on the unknown future.

However, beyond these common benefits, each type of mindfulness does yield unique mental effects and long-term consequences. Research on the long-term changes in brain structure, stress, and social behavior is just beginning; however, Laurie Cameron (Everyday Mindfulness, National Geographic) summarizes it this way: "The repetition of the mental training in effect rewires your brain with new neural pathways that incline you to respond to situations in more skillful ways than automatically reacting out of habit. What's amazing about this: You get to be in the driver's seat of shaping your brain through deliberate practice instead of unwittingly wiring your brain through the influence of cultural norms and your old habits."

What Types of Mindfulness are there?

Everyday Mindfulness

There are as many types of mindfulness as there are activities of the day. The ultimate goal of mindfulness is not to retreat away from life when things become chaotic, but to engage in all aspects of life mindfully. The HRH Emotional Fitness team has created a grouping of everyday activities that can be used mindfully ([Everyday Mindfulness](#)), and for medical providers a great one is handwashing.

Gratitude Journaling

The act of thinking through the day and focusing on what is going well, what is good, and what is working properly activates our frontal lobe, which in turn allows our Amygdala (which processes sleep, emotions, and pain) to be less reactive. These chemical and structural changes to our brains accumulate over time, making us more resilient! Check out these [gratitude tips](#) from the HRH Emotional Fitness team.

Meditation

In addition to engaging in everyday activities mindfully, meditation (taking time out from daily activities to spend time on a focused mindfulness activity) is a very useful tool. Every human on the planet needs at least 20 minutes of this down time per day to be maximally healthy. Folks who do this consistently improve their tissue repair and immune function (see [pdf of the H. Benson article](#)). Click here for [information on which types of meditation are best used for particular outcomes](#), so you can focus your precious time more effectively.

Here at Hendricks, burnout is a significant concern, and we have joined this worldwide effort to recapture the foundational meaning of medicine so that our physicians, other medical clinicians, and patients alike can reap the benefits of excellent medical care. Please join us in our efforts individually and corporately to decrease burnout.

HRH Emotional Fitness Team