

## Mindfulness Quick Checklist

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Not sure where to start? Here's a little checklist for you to start your mindfulness practice today!

- Schedule time in your week to practice mindfulness
- Find a comfortable, distraction-free space where you can practice
- Download a guided meditation app
- Visit the mindfulness / intentional spaces on campus
- Find a journal or notebook to write reflections or gratitude
- Check the Student Health and Wellness Center calendar for upcoming mindfulness events



Student Health and Wellness Center calendar

# The **MINDFULNESS** Workbook

*A Panther's guide to taking a pause*



**STUDENT HEALTH  
AND WELLNESS CENTER**

Medical • Counseling • Health Promotion and Advocacy



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## Resources (Continued)

### **STAFF RESOURCES**

Employee Assistance Program  
[uwm.edu/hr/eap/](http://uwm.edu/hr/eap/)

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Crisis Textline  
*Text HOME to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis counseling*

Suicide and Crisis Hotline  
*Call 988*

Milwaukee County Crisis Line  
*Call (414)257-7222*

Waukesha County Crisis Line  
*Call (262)548-7666 during business hours or (262)547-3388*

Washington County Crisis Line  
*Call (262)365-6565*

The Trevor Project  
*Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678*

### **UWM MINDFULNESS RESOURCES**

*Scan here for a map of mindfulness spaces at UWM and a list of mindfulness practices and resources.*



*Reserve the Student Health and Wellness Center Mindful Space here!*

[uwm.edu/wellness/mindfulness](http://uwm.edu/wellness/mindfulness)

## Resources

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### **RELATED RESOURCES**



UREC  
[uwm.edu/urec/](http://uwm.edu/urec/)

UWM FitWell  
[uwm.edu/publichealth/fitwell-courses/](http://uwm.edu/publichealth/fitwell-courses/)

### **STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER**

[uwm.edu/wellness](http://uwm.edu/wellness)

Counseling Services  
[uwm.edu/wellness/counseling](http://uwm.edu/wellness/counseling)

Let's Talk  
[uwm.edu/wellness/counseling/lets-talk](http://uwm.edu/wellness/counseling/lets-talk)

24/7 Mental Health Support Line  
Call or Text 1-888-531-2142

Survivor Support & Victim Advocacy Services  
[uwm.edu/wellness/advocacy/](http://uwm.edu/wellness/advocacy/)

Medical Services  
[uwm.edu/wellness/medical/](http://uwm.edu/wellness/medical/)

BASICS  
[uwm.edu/BASICS](http://uwm.edu/BASICS)

## Reflection Questions

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Take this space to reflect on what you already know about mindfulness, as well as your hopes and expectations for going through this workbook.

What do you hope to get out of this workbook?

Why do you want to learn more about mindfulness?

How might practicing mindfulness benefit you at this time?

What other thoughts are you having as you begin this workbook?

## What is mindfulness?

**Mindfulness** is a practice or set of practices that develop the capacity for a calm, focused mind that is open, responsive and sensitive for optimal teaching, advising, management, and learning. Based on neuroscientific research, mindfulness has been proven to help participants reduce stress and revitalize their professional and personal lives by promoting awareness, presence, compassion, concentration, and focus.

### Those who practice mindfulness often report:

- Feeling more positive
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Cultivation of compassion of oneself and others
- Minimized drama in everyday life
- Lowered stress levels, even in hectic times
- Appreciation for the small things in life
- Greater connection to values and goals

In practicing mindfulness, we invite ourselves to notice experiences as they unfold from moment to moment.

### Mindfulness Vocabulary: (from Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction)

**Non-judging** - Your experience is your experience, free yourself from judgement

**Patience** - Recognize and respond on your own time

**Beginner's Mind** - Be receptive to possibility, you do not have to have it all figured out all at once

**Trust** - Listen for what you need and trust yourself

**Acceptance** - Accept each moment for what it is

**Letting Go** - Release, let it be

**Non-striving** - Just being, sit in the space you are in

Other words to note: gratitude, generosity, playfulness, compassion, resilience

## Reflection Questions

Throughout this workbook we have practiced many mindfulness skills and tools:

- S.T.O.P Practice
- Mindful Movement
- Square Breathing
- Gratitude Practice
- Guided Meditation
- Joy List
- Mindful Eating
- and more!

Which of these mindfulness skills / practices would you like to continue?

What have you valued most about your time practicing mindfulness?

How can you keep everyday mindfulness in your life going forward?

<sup>1</sup> Kabat-Zinn, Jon. (1990). Cultivating Qualities of Mind for Mindfulness Practice. *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*.



## How to Practice Mindfulness

When we first start to practice mindfulness it can be frustrating, overwhelming, aggravating, and hard to do. That's okay; you're not alone if you are feeling like this. Over time, with practice and patience, you'll hopefully notice those feelings dissipate. There are a few things to keep in mind while practicing mindfulness that might help to ease some of these frustrations.

### **Here are some considerations to keep in mind while you practice:**

**Timing:** Finding a time to practice mindfulness can often be the tricky. You'll want to find some space within your daily schedule and try to practice daily!

**Location:** You'll also want to pick a space that is quiet and brings you peace. Especially when you are first starting out, it can be helpful to have the space be free of distractions such as your phone.

**Breathwork:** This is often a common skill throughout mindfulness practice. In order to practice breathwork, you want to pick a part of your body that you feel comfortable focusing on that moves while you breathe naturally. This could be your nostrils, stomach, or chest, for example.

**Sitting:** If a mindfulness exercise requires sitting, you'll want to sit comfortably either in a chair or on the floor. If you choose to sit in a chair, sit with your feet flat, shoulder width apart, and try to sit comfortably upright. You'll also want to rest your hands on your knees or somewhere comfortable, like in your lap.

**Pestering thoughts:** Remember that we need to acknowledge those thoughts, accept them for what they are, and move on.

<sup>1</sup> Kabat-Zinn, John. (2013). Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness. New York: Bantam Books

## S.T.O.P. Practice

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**S.T.O.P. Practice** is a mindfulness practice for stress that helps us to come back to the present moment and gain perspective. It helps us to mitigate the negative effects of stress and instead see that we have the ability to control our response to the pressure of stress.<sup>1</sup>

### **S** **STOP.**

When you feel stressed or overwhelmed and feel like reacting, stop and get into a comfortable position.

### **T** **TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS.**

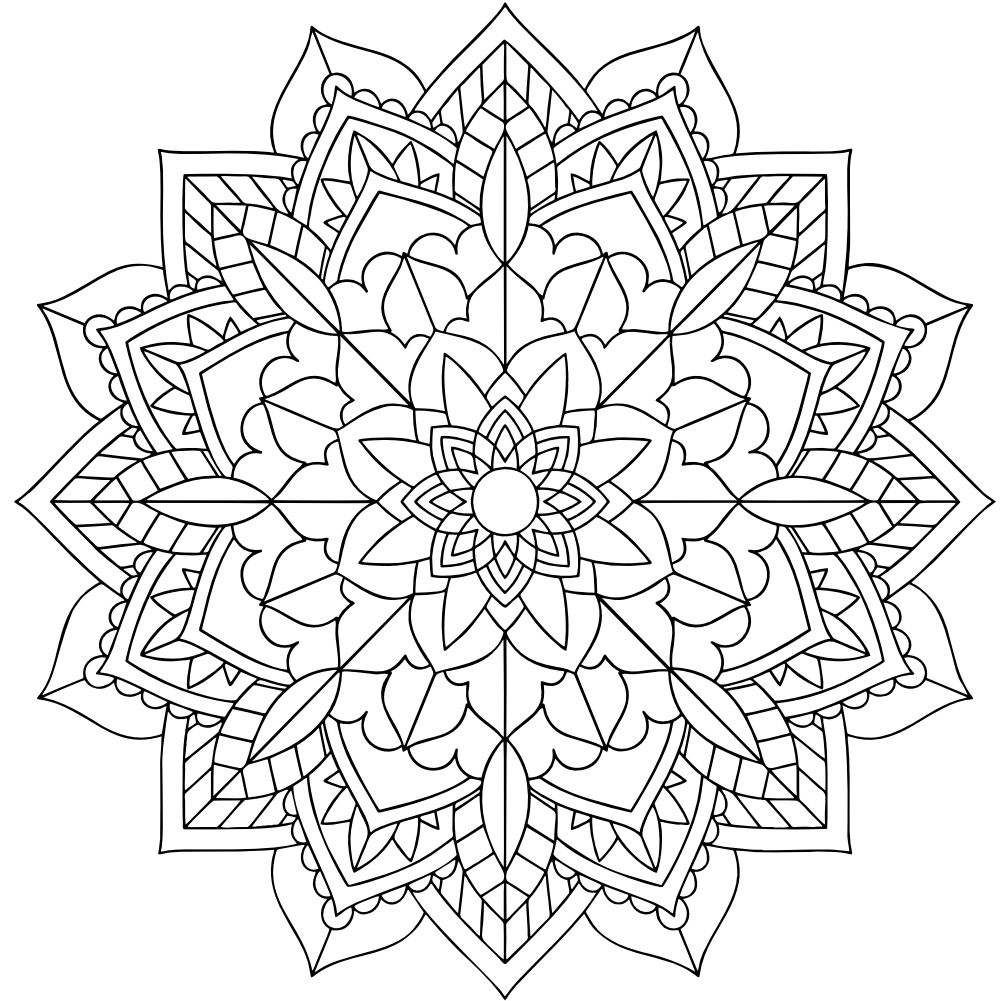
Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Allow your body to fall into its natural rhythm of breathing.

### **O** **OBSERVE.**

Notice where there is tension or tightness in your body and observe the thoughts and feelings in your mind. Simply be aware of your experience in the moment and just let it be whatever it is.

### **P** **PROCEED.**

Ask yourself: "What's most important for me to pay attention to right now?" or "What am I needing right now?" Move forward by acting on the answer to those questions.



This practice has been called a "portable" practice for stress because it can be done anywhere at anytime. Whether you are feeling stressed at work, class, home, the library, or even during your commute to campus, this practice can help you to feel grounded and rise to meet the stress you are facing.

<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, Elisha. *Stressing Out? S.T.O.P. Mindful.*

## Mindfulness & Creativity

We can use mindfulness to cultivate creativity or a space to allow creative thinking. Engaging in activities that allow us to create something also provides a space to practice mindfulness.<sup>1</sup>

One simple way to practice mindfulness and creativity is through coloring. Coloring books, specifically mandalas have been used to alleviate stress and anxiety, as well as to improve mood. Studies have shown that mandalas lower heart rate, promoting relaxation.<sup>2</sup>

**Take some time to color the coloring pages on the next page. Focus on coloring and leave any thoughts, feelings, and emotions to come and go, not staying too long. Allow yourself to relax.**

Another way to practice mindfulness and creativity is through crafts. Often crafts have a repetitive nature that can feel very meditative and allow us to focus and relax.

### Mindfulness Craft Ideas:

- Knitting
- Crocheting
- Rock painting
- Creating a collage
- Wood carving
- Sewing
- Folding origami
- Sculpting / pottery

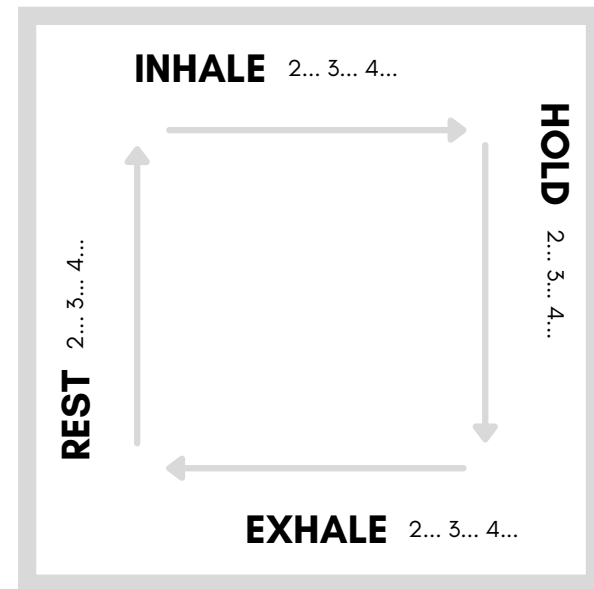
*You can also think of crafts or art projects you enjoyed as a child and try those. Be playful! Or pick up a new craft you've never tried and try using your beginner's mind!*

<sup>1</sup> Formica, Michael J. (2015). Mindfulness and Cultivating Creativity. *Psychology Today*. [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/enlightened-living/201503/mindfulness-and-cultivating-creativity](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/enlightened-living/201503/mindfulness-and-cultivating-creativity)

<sup>2</sup> Mantzios, M., & Giannou, K. (2018). When Did Coloring Books Become Mindful? Exploring the Effectiveness of a Novel Method of Mindfulness-Guided Instructions for Coloring Books to Increase Mindfulness and Decrease Anxiety. *Frontiers in psychology*, 9. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00056

## Square Breathing

**Square Breathing**, also known as "box breathing," involves inhaling for four counts, holding for four counts, exhaling for four counts and resting for another four counts. It is used as a stress management technique, and it can be practiced anywhere at any time. It helps us to slow and focus on our breathing.



Some people find it helpful to visualize the box in their head with their eyes open or shut and to follow the lines of the box as they continue to breathe and count.

If you're new to this practice, consider trying just one full square to start, or shortening the duration of the rest/hold, then returning your breath to its natural pace.

## 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

**Grounding** is a practice that helps you breathe and connect to the present moment. It helps you to refocus when you are feeling stressed, anxious, foggy, or even just "off." The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique is a helpful way to ground yourself anytime anywhere.

It may take a few times to get acquainted with this practice, but remember to have a beginners mind and be patient with yourself as you complete this exercise.<sup>1</sup>

**5 Find five things that you can see in the space around you.**  
What's in front of you? Behind you? What's above?

**4 Notice four things you can physically feel in the present moment.**  
Are your hands resting somewhere? Are your feet touching the floor? Do you feel a draft or breeze?

**3 Listen to three sounds that you hear.**  
Are there birds? Wind? People chatting? Papers shuffling?

**2 Pick out two things you can smell, or recall two smells that you enjoy.**  
Does the room you're in have a particular scent? Do you smell coffee, freshly cut grass, someone's lunch?

**1 Describe one good quality about yourself.**  
Be kind to yourself.

## R.A.I.N

**R.A.I.N** is a tool for practicing mindfulness when we feel overwhelmed by our thoughts and emotions. The four step process can be practiced anywhere, anytime, and in a relatively short amount of time. R.A.I.N can help bring focus back to the present moment and ease discomfort.<sup>1</sup> This practice helps manage anxiety, cultivate self-compassion, and address negative emotions. It allows individuals to explore their emotions without judgment, fostering better understanding and acceptance of their experiences.<sup>2</sup>

**R Recognize what is happening.**  
Describe your thoughts, feelings, actions, and sensations.

**A Allow the experience to be there, just as it is.**  
What can you tell yourself to remind yourself to be open to the experience? What can you do to keep yourself calm while you experience the moment?

**I Investigate with interest and care.**  
Notice how you feel, and ask yourself: Why do I feel this way? What am I believing in this moment? What do I need right now?

**N Nurture with self-compassion.**  
What can you tell yourself to show self-compassion, reassurance, kindness, or love?

<sup>1</sup> (2021) RAIN: A Mindful Framework for Addressing Anxious Thoughts. *Anxiety & Depression Association of America*. [www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/personal-stories/rain-mindful-framework-addressing-anxious-thoughts](http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/personal-stories/rain-mindful-framework-addressing-anxious-thoughts)

<sup>2</sup> (2024) Therapeutic Rain: A Method for Self-Compassion and Healing. *Bay Area CBT Center*. [www.bayareacbtcenter.com/therapeutic-rain/](http://www.bayareacbtcenter.com/therapeutic-rain/)

<sup>1</sup> 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding. *YOU@UWM*. [you.uwm.edu/matter/article/2308](http://you.uwm.edu/matter/article/2308)

## Mindful Eating

With **mindful eating**, we focus on "understanding what foods nourish us and what foods help us stay healthy while also encouraging a deeper appreciation of every meal, every mouthful, and every ingredient," accord to [headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com). It is about being mindful of what our bodies need, being present while eating, and freeing ourselves from restrictions that create feelings of guilt, anxiety, and self-judgement. Bringing mindfulness into eating means a kinder, gentler approach to eating.

### Six ways to practice mindful eating:<sup>1</sup>

- Listening to our bodies and stopping when we feel full
- Eating when our bodies tell us to eat (i.e., when our stomach growls, energy feels low)
- Eating foods that are healthy, but also eating foods that taste good to us
- When eating, putting distractions away (i.e., phones, tv)
- Considering where the food comes from

### Tips for Mindful and Intuitive Eating:<sup>2</sup>

- Notice your senses while you are eating. This means you may have to put down your phone, close your laptop, and put away any distractions while you eat.
- Get rid of restrictions. Mindful eating is NOT a diet! Instead of restrictions, mindful eating focuses on savoring our food without judgement and finding what foods feel most nourishing for our bodies.
- Listen to your gut. Your gut knows best when you're hungry, not hungry, too full, etc. Listening to what our bodies are telling us is not only an effective way to be mindful about how much we're eating but also to know what foods don't agree with us.
- Know who you are as an eater. Do you like to graze? Do you prefer snacking? Do you eat a strict three meals a day? Whatever type of eating you do (there's no wrong way to eat!), acknowledge it and it will help you to understand why you eat the way you do.

## Creating a Joy List

**Creating a joy list** is a great way to be mindful of the good things in our lives. Write down all the things (people, places, activities, songs, etc.) that bring you joy. Then, be intentional about integrating at least one of those things into your life every day. You can also go to this list when you are feeling down or need a pick-me-up.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

<sup>1</sup> Willard, Christopher. (2019) *Mindful*. [www.mindful.org/6-ways-practice-mindful-eating/](https://www.mindful.org/6-ways-practice-mindful-eating/)

<sup>2</sup> Mindful Eating. *Headspace*. [www.headspace.com/mindfulness/mindful-eating](https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness/mindful-eating)

## Mindful Reflection

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Mindfulness can be simply creating space for our emotions, thoughts, and habits to be noticed. Journaling and reflection can be a great way to do that. Also, reflecting on how mindfulness is affecting our day to day can be helpful.

What matters most in your life? What do you value?

What helps you to feel enough or whole?

Is there one thing/thought/expectation that you can let go of today that might enhance your sense of well-being?

What other reflective questions could benefit you at this time?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## A Meditation for Justice

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Mindfulness opens us up to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our world, increases our tolerance with discomfort, and cultivates connection and belonging.

Most of us have ways of thinking about ourselves and others that are limited and riddled with misconceptions and biases. It causes harm to many people and to ourselves when we think about the identities we and others hold in this way.

Mindfulness helps us see the full context for people's actions, decrease our negativity bias, and hold others as equals to ourselves. Mindfulness helps us to tolerate the discomfort that comes from engaging in deeper, richer, more complicated conversations on race, gender, privilege, and more. Mindfulness helps us stay aware in dialogue rather than withdraw.

### **Meditation: Compassion for Suffering of Injustice**

*(inspired by the gathas of Thich Nhat Hanh & Toglen practice)*

- Be aware of breathing in, aware of breathing out
- Be aware of body, releasing tensions
- Be aware of heart, opening heart, tenderness to heart
- Be aware of emotions, holding in compassion, smiling, easing/releasing with breath
- Notice your own suffering of injustice - be aware, notice how it manifests in body, emotions
- Hold this suffering in compassion, ease with breath
- Be aware of this suffering as a pattern in the world - visualize how it affects many people. Hold in compassion, send ease, wish for relief
- Notice suffering of marginalized people. What are you aware of?
- Return to awareness of breath, ease, release of tension
- Notice suffering of privileged people (guilt, disconnection, feel this energy, hold in compassion, release, ease, send relief)
- Return to awareness of breath, ease, release of tension

## Mindfulness & Implicit Bias

Building mindfulness into our daily lives includes being mindful about the implicit biases we have and working to acknowledge and address them.

**Implicit biases** (sometimes called "unconscious biases") are automatic, internal processes that associate certain characteristics and have certain attitudes toward members of a specific social group.

Mindfulness can help us acknowledge and unlearn these biases. It's important to note that doing so takes time—as we continue to notice and focus on our habits that come as a result of implicit bias, we can more accurately perceive where our biases lie and consequently prevent harmful actions that they may cause.<sup>1</sup>

### Facing our Biases in the Moment:<sup>2</sup>

- Notice your habitual thought patterns
- Uncover your preconceptions
- Question your initial response
- Let go of what you think you know
- Be open to shifting your perspective

**Take a moment to consider the implicit biases that come up in your life.** Where do they exist? How can you work to face these implicit biases in the moment using the strategies above?

<sup>1</sup> Mollie Teitelbaum. (2020). 5 Mindful Habits to Fight Bias Every Day. *Mindful*. [www.mindful.org/5-mindful-habits-to-fight-bias-every-day/](http://www.mindful.org/5-mindful-habits-to-fight-bias-every-day/)

<sup>2</sup> Vinny Ferraro, Mindful. (2020) Working with Bias in the Heat of the Moment. *Mindful*. [www.mindful.org/in-the-heat-of-the-moment/](http://www.mindful.org/in-the-heat-of-the-moment/)

## Mindfulness & Gratitude

**Mindfulness and gratitude** go hand in hand. Consciously giving thanks for the good things and people in our lives positively affects our well-being and relationships. Regularly expressing gratitude has been shown to help people enjoy better health and achieve greater happiness.

**Try practicing gratitude here.** You could be grateful for any number of things: people, places, moments from your day, things, opportunities, etc.

### I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

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If you want to continue this practice beyond the workbook, consider starting a gratitude journal. A few times a week, write down some things you are grateful for. Remember to be specific and personal with what you write down. Aim for depth over breadth. See good things throughout your day as "gifts" and write them down in detail in your journal.

## Guided Meditation

**Guided Meditation** is a script that you listen to, read, etc. that focuses your attention, promotes breath work, and creates calm. It is a great way to get started with a meditation practice.

Mediation has many benefits for our mental health, including: increased awareness and compassion, a sense of calm, and improved focus. It also benefits our physical health by relaxing our bodies and reducing our stress responses in the body, specifically in the parasympathetic nervous system. This helps lower blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen consumption, resulting in higher energy levels and better sleep, as well as a strengthened immune response.

### Five reasons to Meditate:

- Helps us to better understand ourselves
- Lowers our stress levels
- Helps us feel more connected with others
- Improves our focus
- Helps to clear the chatter in our brains

### Healthy Minds Program

The Healthy Minds Program app provides science-based podcast-style lessons and both seated and active meditations. This program will help you develop skills to tap into these learnings for a healthier, happier you.



Download the Healthy Minds Program app in the App Store or the Google Play Store for free.

## Mindful Movement

**Mindful Movement** allows us to bring full attention to our movement, our body, our breath, and how we feel physically. This can take the form of breathing exercises, a walking meditation, stretching, yoga, or bringing your attention to your breath and your body when you feel stressed or overwhelmed. Mindful movement has many benefits including shifting the activity of our autonomic nervous system, which regulates our heart rate, blood pressure, and our flight-or-fight response. When we combine physical movement with mindfulness, we combine two highly effective strategies for decreasing stress and bringing a sense of calm to our mind and body.

### Here are some ways to make your movement more mindful:

- Be fully present with your body when you work out. Leave the headphones at home and focus on how you feel.
- When walking, ditch the distractions like your phone, and focus on your body and your breath as you walk.
- If you sit a lot throughout the day, make an effort to move and take breaks regularly. Set a timer if needed.

### A Basic Walking Meditation:<sup>2</sup>

- Begin by walking at a normal pace.
- Notice how your body feels. Are you tense? Are you relaxed? Are you tired?
- Pay attention to how you walk. What is the pace? How big are your steps? Feel your feet on the ground with each step.
- Tune into what is going on around you. Focus on the sights, sounds, smells around you as you walk.
- Then, turn your attention back to your body and your pace while walking.
- Breathe in and out at a natural pace. Notice how your body feels now that you've taken this time for yourself.

<sup>1</sup> Getting Started with Mindful Movement. *Mindful*. [www.mindful.org/getting-started-with-mindful-movement/](http://www.mindful.org/getting-started-with-mindful-movement/)

<sup>2</sup> Walking Meditation. *Headspace*. [www.headspace.com/meditation/walking-meditation](http://www.headspace.com/meditation/walking-meditation)

## Mindfulness & Nature

**Nature** can teach us how to be mindful. It is playful, non-judging and accepting, and it is a perfect example of "just being." We can go to nature to practice mindfulness, whether it is through simply sitting outside and listening, a nature walk or a movement meditation. Getting outside and focusing on our surroundings can help us to disconnect from the stress of the day-to-day and be mindfully in the moment.

### Sit Outside and Listen - A Nature Meditation <sup>1</sup>

- Find somewhere outdoors where you won't be disturbed.
- Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and then bring your attention toward what you can hear.
- Notice the sounds most obvious to you, as well as those that are in the background. Notice how some sounds come and go, while others are constant. Notice how some get louder and softer.
- When your mind wanders, notice you've become distracted and gently return your attention to listening.
- Continue listening in this way for at least five minutes.

### Places near UWM to try a nature walk:

- Downer Woods
- Lake Park
- Atwater Beach
- Estabrook Park
- Audubon Center
- Urban Ecology Center
- Lakeshore State Park
- Campus neighborhoods

## Guided Meditation - Continued

### Meditation Tracker:

Date: / /

Total Time: : :

Goal for the week:

#### Sunday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Thursday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Monday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Friday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Tuesday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Saturday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

#### Wednesday

Type:  
Duration:  
Thoughts:

<sup>1</sup> (2018) Three Outdoor Mindfulness Activities to do in Nature. *Nature Wise*.  
[www.naturewise.com/blogs/blog/3-outdoor-mindfulness-activities-to-do-in-nature](http://www.naturewise.com/blogs/blog/3-outdoor-mindfulness-activities-to-do-in-nature)

## Mindful Self-Care

**Self-care** means evaluating your needs and following through on the honest answer. According to [mindful.org](http://mindful.org), it is "the practice of taking an active role in protecting our own well-being, pursuing happiness, and having the ability, tools, and resources to respond to periods of stress so that they don't result in imbalance and lead to a health crisis."<sup>1</sup>

One way to mindfully integrate self-care into your life is to create a self-care plan. This plan can act as a roadmap for times of stress in order to help you get back "home" and find balance again.

### How to create a self-care plan:<sup>1</sup>

- Create a self-care activity list organized around different parts of your life. Don't forget to include:
  - Work
  - Physical Fitness
  - Relationships
  - Community

For each area above, write down the activities or strategies that you can call on in times of stress that will contribute to your well-being and help you to find balance. *(See template on next page)*

- Note any barriers that could arise and how to acknowledge and move past them.
- Share your plan with your close friends and community to hold yourself accountable.

<sup>1</sup>A Guide to Practicing Self-Care with Mindfulness. *Mindful*. [www.mindful.org/a-guide-to-practicing-self-care-with-mindfulness/](http://www.mindful.org/a-guide-to-practicing-self-care-with-mindfulness/)

## Self-Care Roadmap

Use this page to create your self-care roadmap. See how-to on previous page for directions.

### Work:

Barriers:  
Supports:

### Physical Fitness:

Barriers:  
Supports:

### Relationships / Community:

Barriers:  
Supports:

### Other:

Barriers:  
Supports:

### Additional self-care ideas:

- Unplug - put your phone away, turn off social media and the news
- Schedule a call with a friend or relative during your lunch break
- Go to bed early
- Ask for help
- Say "no" - and say "yes" to yourself
- Take a stretch break