



MY LITTLE PLACE OF CALM

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10 tips for bringing mindfulness into your daily life

If you are familiar with mindfulness you will know there are a whole host of formal practices that you can follow and a number of apps to help you track your mindfulness practices daily. However what about outside formal practice? How can you make space and time in your day to live mindfully?

So I've put some tips together to help you be mindful throughout your day. You could try them all, you could pick a few and concentrate on those, or you could mix it up everyday.

Try to anchor yourself whenever you can in present moment awareness. Being lost in a head full of thoughts, spending your day in constant in doing mode, leads to much of the beauty in the world being left unnoticed. Open your senses, let your thoughts 'be' for a while and you may be surprised at what you discover.

1. **Waking up** – take 5 deep long breaths before you get out of bed, pause, and get up without jumping up to check your phone. Break that autopilot of habit and start your morning being present and aware of what is actually here for you in real life and not what is here for you virtually, via your screen.
2. **Taking a shower** – immerse your head under the running water – be fully present with the sensation of the water, the temperature, the noise, watching the water run down into the drain. Try short durations of time at first – maybe a few minutes before you start your bathing routine - you can always build this up over time.
3. **Boiling the kettle** – stand and watch it for the duration of the boil – listen to the sounds it makes, watch the steam starting to rise, notice your feet grounded on the floor, breath easily and steadily. There's nowhere else to be in these few minutes.
4. **First hot drink/cold drink of the day** - savour the taste, be completely immersed in the taste, texture and temperature of the drink alone. Nothing else. Manage it for the first slurp, build up to the whole cup/glass.
5. **Getting outside** – if you have a garden, open the back door, put your bare feet on the grass – there is medical research ongoing that grounding on the natural earth is good for the body to combat inflammation. If you haven't got outside space, open a window, feel the breeze on your face and listen to the sounds outside. It may be birdsong, it may be passing traffic – whatever sounds you encounter – spend a few moments just listening. Try and find more subtle sounds, try and pick out the silence too.
6. **Mindful walking** – use your school walk, your walk to the train station, your walk from the car park into work, your lunch hour, to walk mindfully. Pay attention to what your body is doing – the sensation of heel to toe as you place one foot in front of the other, perhaps coordinate your steps with your breath. Shift your awareness to your other senses. What can you hear? What can you see? What can you smell?
7. **Taking a pause from screen time** – if you use screens for work or at home, take a pause away. This could be to look out of a window for a few minutes, getting up to walk around, make a drink - whatever that may be to break the cycle. Use this time to simply focus on the breath cycle – following the full breath in, the full breath out for a few breaths to bring you present.
8. **Journalling** – one of my absolute favourites. Keeping a gratitude journal where you write 5 things each day that have made you smile, inspired you, made you feel grateful to be alive. It can be small, it can be huge but be specific otherwise it gets samey and stale eg. 'I am grateful that my husband made me a cup of tea this morning even though he was rushing out to work' rather than, 'I am grateful for my husband'. The more specific and creative we are, the more we cultivate a positive outlook on our lives, finding beauty in the everyday where you might normally perceive it to be another boring day in the office or another boring day doing housework.
9. **Give yourself time in the week to do something that feeds your soul and do it fully present** – yoga, a run, a bath, a book, knitting, gardening – allow yourself the time to do it. Looking after yourself by doing what makes you feel good is an absolute necessity. Being aware and mindful that you are setting this time aside reinforces that you are important and deserve this.
10. **Mindful communication** – do you find yourself half listening to a story someone is telling you and already formulating in your head what you want to say, desperate to jump in with your opinion before they've barely finished? When we speak to each other we have the opportunity to engage with total awareness, giving the other person the attention they deserve, connecting with that person from a place that is present. How you choose to communicate can bring out the best version of you, how you feel about the people around us and how they in turn adapt to you.

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