



## Tips for Establishing and Maintaining Mindfulness Practice

### Tips for Motivation

- Understanding the benefits of mindfulness
- Understanding the value of regular practice
- Benchmarking your progress
- Informing and inspiring yourself
- Plugging into a mindful community

### Tips for Establishing a daily habit

- First finding your easiest mindfulness practices
- Setting up a place and a time for a daily practice
- Make it a priority
- If you run out of time even do just a few breaths of mindfulness
- Anticipate and plan for changes in your routine

**If you do drop your practice don't despair. Just start again!**

*No matter how high the mountains of the great teachings are, no matter how deep the sea of ignorance is, they will be as nothing before a boundless spirit of **determination**.*

*Koun Yamada, Japanese Zen Master, 1907-1989*

## Motivation

### ○ Understanding the benefits of mindfulness

By now there is a veritable plethora of research and information available showing the benefits of mindfulness in multiple domains including physical and mental health, social intelligence, stress management, intellectual and physical flexibility, pain management and creativity to mention a few. Research the ones you are interested in. That will give you greater motivation.

We breakdown the benefits of mindfulness for specific groups of people on our website ([Why Do Mindfulness](http://mindfulness.org.au/why-do-mindfulness)), such as the general public, corporate professionals, carers, health care professionals, those suffering pain, anxiety or depression etc.

### ○ Understanding the value of regular practice


Mindfulness is a skill just like juggling, Latin dancing, tennis, mastering new computer software and speaking a foreign language. As we learn any of these skills including mindfulness, the brain develops new circuitry

Who can mindfulness help?

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ANYONE including:

- the stressed, those who want to excel
- academics, professionals, business people athletes and artists
- from primary school students to parliamentarians to army officers to CEOs our training can help?



General public

Our daily lives can confront us with an intense mix of emotions, challenges and pressures. We are often just coping and desperately wishing we could do it better. It is easy to become jaded and to feel as if life has lost its freshness. With mindfulness, we learn how to relax



Corporate professionals

In today's highly pressured work environment that is facing constant change, your mind and that of your team's will make all the difference in the ultra-competitive market. There are over a couple hundred scholarly articles published on mindfulness and



through a process called neuroplasticity. Neurons that fire together, wire together. As this happens the dance step that was once impossible becomes second nature and the anxiety, we couldn't tolerate sitting with becomes easy to be with. This only happens with regular practice, In that sense learning mindfulness is no different to learning to juggle.

### ○ Benchmarking your progress

We think this is so helpful that it is a key feature of mindfulness training with Dr Walsh. Progress of mindfulness abilities can be spectacular over time but almost impossible to discern moment by moment. The idea of benchmarking is like measuring a child's height with a pencil mark on the door frame. When you came back and measure it again in two months time the amount of growth can be pleasantly surprising.

Children don't need to strive to grow. They just need the right conditions with good nutrition etc. Similarly, as meditators, we don't need to strive to achieve the benefits, We just need to create **the right conditions by meditating with the right attitude** of bringing open hearted curiosity to our here and now experience. The fruits of our labour will then naturally appear like apples on a tree.

In our training, we help each student pick individual benchmarks that are particularly helpful for them. Common measures in early training are noting how you handle driving in heavy traffic and the capacity to notice small pleasant moments in daily life.

### ○ Informing and inspiring yourself

We can read literature and blogs, watch videos, Ted talks or podcasts or go to a seminars or lectures that explain mindfulness and its benefits. In this way we can keep up with the latest development in mindfulness and keep engaged. Feel free to subscribe to our mailing list for news and tips on how to start or improving your mindfulness practice

### ○ Plugging into a mindful community

- § By attending a mindfulness course
- § Practicing with friends or a group every now and then makes all the difference for some.
- § Having an experienced mindfulness practitioner as a coach can save you from giving up, by helping you with difficulties.



*No matter how high the mountains of the great teachings are, no matter how deep the sea of ignorance is, they will be as nothing before a boundless spirit of determination.*



[mindfulness.org.au](http://mindfulness.org.au)

Koun Yamada "Great Faith, Great Doubt, Great Determination"



## Establishing the regular daily habit

### ○ Finding your easiest mindfulness practices

There are a variety of mindfulness practices. These included the [mindful check in](#), mindfulness of breath, the organic body scan, mindful walking and [mindfulness in action](#). You can do most of these practices with or without [soundtracks](#) guiding you. Most people find **one or two practices to be easier or more beneficial** than others. It is a good idea to start your regular mindfulness practice based on these. That will help your motivation. Later on you can move on to the other practices and the challenges that they present. That keeps the practice interesting and engaging.

### ○ Setting up a place and a time for a daily practice

If possible make that place conducive to your practice. In the beginning, you want to make it as easy to practice as possible. It is helpful if you choose a reasonably quiet time and **a place where you're not likely to be disturbed**. Some people like to put some special loving care in the environment in which they will be practising. They might want to make it look nice or to attend to the Feng Shui of the room. Some people like to have altars that reflect their religious or spiritual beliefs.

Sometimes flexibility and imagination are required **to find an appropriate time and place**. People with young children often find it easier to **meditate at work in their office**. Single parents of preschool children often find it very difficult to find time. Sometimes they can fit it in when the **children are napping**. Some people meditate **on the train on the way to work** in the morning.

Usually it is best if you link the mindfulness practice into your normal daily routine. Most people have a predictable morning routine into which mindfulness can be slotted. The important thing is that the practice should not be based on whether you feel up to it on a particular day or not. Instead it needs to be established as a good habit which is practised without internal disputation, much like brushing your teeth.



Once you have set up a regular time and place, that is a form of **ritual in itself**. Some people like to build a little more ritual around this habit. For example, a short recital of dedication at the beginning or end of a practice can be helpful. You may want to **dedicate your practice to the health of a sick relative or to the well-being of people in general or of the planet**. The important thing is that if you decide to do this, that it should be something meaningful to you. That will then reinforce your motivation.

### ○ Make it a priority

If mindfulness is simply something that you just fit in, you'll keep forgetting to do it. Generally people who practice regularly find that mindfulness saves far more time than it uses up. As the mind settles and becomes



clearer it becomes much more efficient. The only way you can find this out yourself, is to make the practice a priority for a period of time. Hopefully that is enough to give you motivation.

- **If you run out of time even do just a few breaths of mindfulness**

If possible, it is important to do this in the place and the time that you have set aside for your regular practice. Even though the practice may be so short that it doesn't really train the mind, **it does train the habit**. This is very much worth it. It takes about **21 days to establish a habit** that supports you. Then it becomes easy to remember to do it, like remembering to brush your teeth. Feeling like it or not doesn't really come into it any more.

Once you have established the habit, it is important to continue supporting the habit in this way. That way you notice when you have missed a day's practice. If you don't do this will mindfulness practice can easily slip away from you.

- **Anticipate and plan for changes in your routine**

For example, when you're travelling, you can think about where and when to do your mindfulness in the same way that you think about what to pack in your travel bags. This little bit of preplanning stops your mindfulness from slipping away from you.

Sometimes people get embarrassed about practising mindfulness when they're staying at a friend's house. Most people find when they explain to their friend very matter-of-factly that they are taking some time out to meditate that it isn't a problem. These days, people are very understanding and sometimes even curious in a good way. You might even have an interesting conversation with your friend about what you're doing.

A new job or a new child can also present challenges that can be managed better with a bit of forethought. It helps to talk with others who have dealt with these challenges before you.

## **Finally if you do drop your practice don't despair. Just start again!**

Remember that just like renewing a physical fitness regime; it won't take nearly as long to reach the same level of mindfulness fitness as it did the first time around.

