



American
Heart
Association®

Meditation Project

Being mindful helps you to be better in just about every part of life, like focusing on homework or feeling less stressed. Practicing mindfulness a little bit every day helps you to build this valuable skill.



OVERVIEW

- This worksheet will guide you through leading your students through a mindfulness activity, complete with a script.
- The activity can be teacher or student led, in-person or recorded.
- Option: Have students create their own script.

OPENING QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What is meditation?
- What benefits do you think meditation has?
- When would you use meditation?



Activity: Mindful Breathing

With this exercise, the focus is on your breathing. You want to pay attention to its natural rhythm and flow and the way it feels on each inhale and exhale.

SAMPLE SCRIPT:

- Start by settling into a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down, and allow your eyes to close or keep them open with a softened gaze.
- Take slow deep breaths.
- Notice your breathing as you inhale and exhale normally. Just pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out.
- Allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm.
- Can you feel the place where the air tickles your nostrils? (PAUSE)
- Pay attention to how the breath gently moves your body. (PAUSE) Can you notice your belly or your chest moving as you breathe?
- If your mind wanders to thoughts, plans or problems, simply notice your mind wandering. Watch the thought as it enters your awareness as neutrally as possible. Then practice letting go of the thought as if it were a leaf floating down a stream. In your mind, place each thought that arises on a leaf and watch as it floats out of sight down the stream. Then bring your attention back to your breath. Your breath is an anchor you can return to over and over again when you become distracted by thoughts.
- Sit for a few minutes, just paying attention to your gentle breathing. See how relaxed you can feel just sitting, breathing in and out.
- Now, we are going to do a short breathing exercise. I want you to inhale for four slow counts. Hold your breath in for four counts. Now exhale for four counts and hold out for four counts. Ready? Breath in. . . .hold exhale hold. . . . Now, repeat three more times on your own.
- You should be able to feel your heart rate decrease and your body relax. It takes practice but this is a great way to start your morning to become focused or at any time to become calmer.
- As this practice comes to an end, slowly open your eyes, and come back fully alert and awake.
- Thank you for this shared mindfulness time together, have an amazing day!



Activity: Mindful Stretching

This will guide you to relaxation with a brief stretching routine. Listen to your body throughout this exercise. None of the stretches should cause pain. If you experience discomfort, stop, or ease up.

SAMPLE SCRIPT:

- Begin by finding a seated position. You may wish to sit on the floor or in a firm chair. Take a deep breath in...hold...and breathe out.
- Keep breathing slowly and deeply throughout this calm stretching relaxation. With your knees bent slightly, place your hands on your thighs. Breathe in. As you exhale, lean forward, reaching your hands to your knees. Pause here as you breathe slowly, allowing a feeling of relaxation to begin. Hold this gentle stretch.
- Breathe in...now exhale and lean forward further, reaching your hands to your lower legs.
- Remember to keep breathing. Reach your hands as far as you can comfortably stretch - all the way to your feet if you are able. Hold the stretch, breathing calmly. Feel the tension leaving your body as you stretch.
- Slowly lean back toward neutral, moving your hands to your knees. Pause here. Breathe in...and out. Continue to breathe calmly as you return to an upright seated position.
- Lower your head forward, bringing your chin toward your chest. Simply let the weight of your head create the stretch, with no force or effort from you. Just relax, letting your head hang forward comfortably. Remember to continue breathing.
- Now look up, leaning your head back. Look toward the sky.
- Return to neutral, facing forward.
- Turn your head now to the left...back to center...and to the right...return to center.
- Lower your left ear toward your left shoulder...return to center...and lower your right ear toward your right shoulder...return to center.
- Inhale as you bring your shoulders up toward your ears....and exhale as you let them drop back to neutral. Repeat, inhale...raising your shoulders. Exhale, lowering your shoulders.
- Inhale...reach forward...stretch your arms forward as you exhale. Breathe in, reaching up above your head. Lower your arms as you breathe out.
- Raise your arms above your head again as you breathe in...and lower them as you breathe out.
- Relax for a moment in a neutral position, breathing calmly and deeply.
- Feel the relaxation in your body...feeling calm and relaxed...heavy...loose and relaxed.
- Take a few moments now to mentally scan your body, noticing any areas that remain tense. You can use calm stretching relaxation to relax any remaining areas of tension.
- Choose one area, and stretch, lengthening the muscles. Relax as you finish the stretch and return to neutral. Choose one more area that needs to relax. Stretch...and relax, returning to neutral.
- Simply sit quietly now for a moment, noticing the feeling of relaxation you are experiencing. Feel the relaxation flowing through your body.
- Thank you for this shared mindfulness time together, have an amazing day!



Activity: Mindful Walking

This exercise is about paying attention to how your body moves as you walk slowly.

SAMPLE SCRIPT:

- To start, pick up one foot and take a step forward, in slow motion. Pay attention to how you naturally keep your balance.
- Now walk in slow motion, step by step. Notice how your arms and legs and feet move. Pay attention to how your knees bend and straighten, as you lift one foot and then the other nice and slow.
- Breathe in and out, in time with your steps. See if you can keep your attention focused on walking slowly, step by step, as you relax and breathe.
- Whenever your mind wanders, gently guide it back to your s-l-o-w motion moving. Keep breathing, in and out, as you enjoy moving in slow motion.
- Great! Feel free to use this exercise between your classes so that you can take breaks from sitting at your desk/table during the day.
- Thank you for this shared mindfulness time together!