



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Mindfulness and Grounding Exercises

BREATH. BODY. MIND

COUNSELLING & LEARNING STRATEGY





Mindful Breathing

Attention to the breath is a foundational aspect of mindfulness. Mindful breathing can help anchor you to the present moment, create awareness of your thoughts and emotions, and ease stress and anxiety.

The simplest practice is to breathe normally and start to observe your breath. You can bring awareness to physical responses and sensations such as the rise and fall of your belly or the way the air feels moving in and out of your nose.

Acknowledge when your mind naturally wanders and return to observing each inhale and exhale.

Repeat often, as needed, anywhere.



Diaphragmatic or Belly Breathing

When we are stressed we tend to hold tension in our upper bodies, and may unconsciously engage in a shallow breathing pattern focused in our throats and chest. Breathing more expansively into our bodies helps relieve the physical and mental impacts of stress.

Find a comfortable position and place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly, closing your eyes if you like. Relax your shoulders, jaw, and belly and any tension you feel in your body. Start to gently expand the belly on the inhale and feel the belly move back and towards the spine on the exhale. The hand on your chest should remain relatively still while your other hand moves in and out with the belly. Take 5-10 breaths this way or until you feel a sense of calm.

You can practice belly breathing anytime and anywhere with the eyes open and hands off your belly and chest.

3 Minute Breathing Space

Adapted from : Zindel V. Segal "Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression"

Purposeful Posture

Find a comfortable seated position and notice if you can bring length to your spine while maintaining a sense of softness in your posture. Rest your hands naturally by your sides or in your lap and place both feet on the ground. Adjust your neck and shoulders so they feel open and relaxed. Close your eyes if you like.

Focus on the Breath

Begin to cultivate an inward awareness, bringing your focus to the breath. Paying attention to the inhale, notice your breath move into your nose, down your throat, and expand your lungs. Exhale naturally. There's no need to change your breath in any way; simply continue to notice the rhythm and qualities of the breath and how the body responds as you breathe. It may be helpful for you to silently repeat to yourself "I am breathing in. I am breathing out."

Awareness

Now bring your awareness to *physical sensations* in your body. You might notice the floor underneath your feet and the chair underneath your seat and legs. Notice other sensations in your body without judgment or labeling them good or bad. This may include places of pressure, contact, or temperature.

(Pause)

Bring your awareness to your *thoughts* and notice what thoughts are popping up in your mind. Try not to engage or be pulled away by pulled by your thoughts. Observe other qualities such as the frequency, content, or quality of these thoughts. Let them arise and allow them to pass.

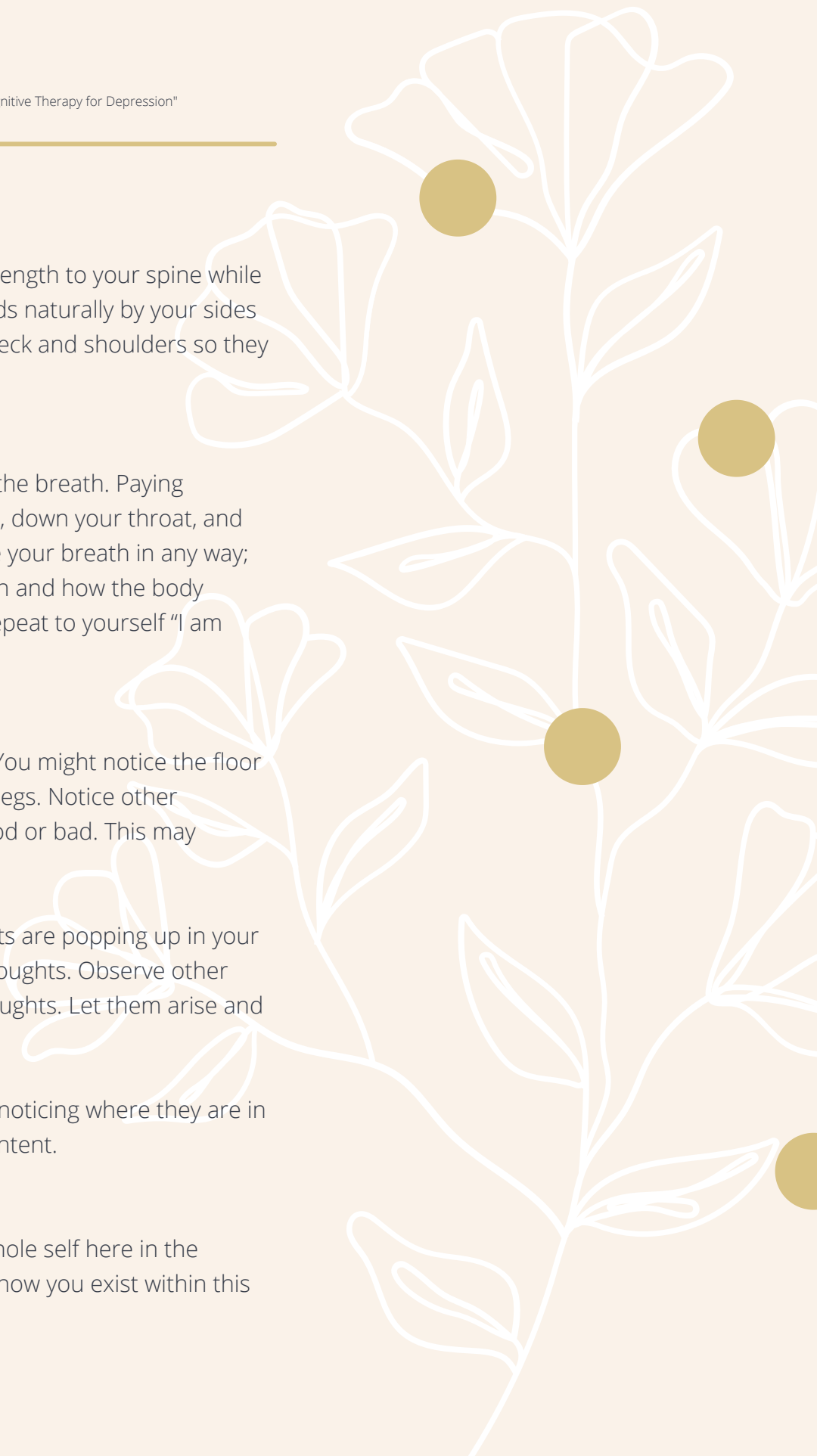
(Pause)

Bring your awareness to any *feelings* that are present. Perhaps noticing where they are in the body. Practice noticing without applying any meaning or content.

Expanding

Expand your awareness to your whole body and notice your whole self here in the present moment. Perhaps visualize the space around you and how you exist within this space. . (Pause.)

When you're ready, open your eyes and close your practice.



Body Scan

Body scanning involves paying attention to parts of the body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence, typically from feet to head. The eyes are generally closed, bringing the focus inwards. The purpose is to tune in to your body, connect to your physical self and notice any sensations you're feeling without judgment.

This practice encourages mindful awareness but many find it relaxing as well. It can be practiced for several minutes or longer depending on your pace and you can be seated or reclined in a comfortable position. It can be self-guided or there are many recordings of different lengths available for free online. Body scans can be practiced any time of day, many find it a helpful practice before sleeping as well



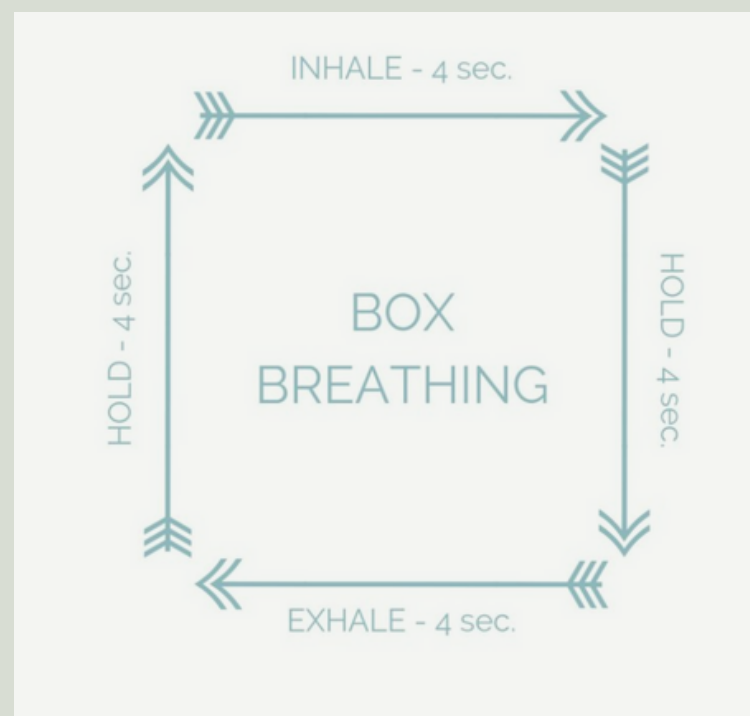
Box/Square Breathing

This breathing technique has four main parts:

Inhale to a count of 4, hold to a count of 4, exhale to a count of 4, hold for a count of 4.

Practice from a relaxed position with the eyes close if it's comfortable. Repeat for as long as you need.

You may find you need to reduce your count to three or increase it to 5 if that feels better. If it's helpful you can close your eyes and visualize a box or square.





Simple Mindfulness Meditation Practice

"Mindfulness meditation is the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally"

- Jon Kabat Zinn

1) Find a comfortable position.

Adjust your posture so you feel open and relaxed. Close your eyes if that is comfortable or perhaps turn your gaze downwards or find something to focus on.

2) Set a time limit

It can be for a minute or two if you are just beginning, a timed practice, or completing the practice when you are ready.

3) Notice your body

Bring awareness to sensations that are present, without judgment or assessment. Simply noticing how the body feels

4) Feel your breath

Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and out.

5) Notice when your mind has wandered

Your attention will wander away from the present moment, and when you notice this, simply return your attention to the breath, the body, or towards watching the passing thoughts.

6) Be kind to your wandering mind

Don't judge yourself or get caught up in the content of your thoughts. Just come back.

7) Close your practice

When you're ready, open your eye or lift your gaze. Take a moment and notice the environment around you. Notice how your body feels right now and any thoughts and emotions that are present.

Grounding through your senses



3-3-3 Technique

Bring yourself into the present moment by noticing and naming:

- 3 things you can See
- 3 things you can Hear
- 3 things you can Feel

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation can be a formal practice, or informal by bringing awareness to this everyday activity, whenever you need to travel from one place to another.

Combining mindfulness and walking allows us to receive the benefits of moving our bodies while attending to the busyness of our minds. This can be particularly helpful to incorporate as a break During longer study sessions or completing assignments.

During mindful walking (running or hiking too!) rather than mentally checking out or becoming lost in your thoughts become more present to your experience.

As you walk.....

- 1) Maintain an expanded sense of your environment, taking it all in
- 2) Notice the rise and fall of your feet, the sensations of your feet connecting to the ground.
- 3) Become aware of sounds, smells, and visual aspects of your environment.
- 4) Notice your breath and how your body feels as you move
- 5) When you notice the mind becoming engaged in thoughts, gently return to any of the steps above





"Wherever you are,
be there totally."

- ECKHART TOLLE



Online Resources

Mindfulness Apps

- Insight Timer
- Smiling Mind
- MyLife Meditation
- UCLA Mindful
- Healthy Minds Program

Websites:

Mindful.org

Guided Recordings

3 Minute Breathing Space by John Kabat Zinn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oWmGJc8NWI>

Belly Breathing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3YyjUmDapc>

Body Scans:
3 Minute recording: <https://www.mindful.org/a-3-minute-body-scan-meditation-to-cultivate-mindfulness/>
8 minute recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS2yDmWk0vs>
30 minute recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15q-N-_kkU

Box/Square Breathing:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6RbW2LtdFs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmt1Znux58>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGKnQN7zUmw&t=21s>

Mindful Walking:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09EO9IJgOiI>

Counselling & Learning Strategy

Life can be complicated. This is especially true when you're juggling your life with your learning.

To support you during difficult times, Royal Roads University offers free, confidential counselling and learning strategy services.

You can get one-time support or short-term ongoing counselling (usually up to five sessions).

We offer services to you, wherever you are.
In person, over the phone or on Zoom or Skype.

Make an Appointment

Use one of the following options to book a counselling appointment:

- Book an appointment using RRU's online booking system - LibCal
<https://libcal.royalroads.ca/appointments/>
- Phone 250.391.2600 ext. 4515 or toll free 1.800.788.8028 (ask for "Counselling Services")
- Email us - counselling@RoyalRoads.ca



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