

Mindfulness Meditation 2: Increasing Awareness

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Introduction: Much of the emotional distress people experience is the result of thinking about upsetting things that have already happened or anticipating negative events that have yet to occur. Distressing emotions such as anger, anxiety, guilt, and sadness are much easier to bear if you only focus on the present – on each moment one at a time. This is an exercise to increase your mindfulness of the present moment so that you can clear away thoughts about past and future events.

Start by observing your breathing.

Don't try to change anything about your breathing, just notice the sensations of breathing air into and out of your body.

Try to focus all of your attention on your breathing.

As you become increasingly aware of your breathing, begin to notice other sensations in your body.

Become mindful of the posture of your body.

Notice how parts of your body feel as you sit, stand, or lie down.

Notice where your body makes contact with something.....with the floor, with a chair, with a desk, or with something else.

Notice how your clothes feel against your skin.

Observe the sensations in your muscles.....along your skin.....in your stomach.....in your lungs as you breathe air in and out.

Continue to observe all of the sensations of your body, becoming increasingly aware of your physical body.

If other thoughts come into your awareness, gently push them out of your mind and re-focus your attention on your body in this moment....continue until you hear the sound of the bell.

Adapted from:

Linehan, M.M. (1993). Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder. NY: The Guilford Press.