

Simple Mindfulness Exercises Using Senses

Seeing

I Spy Memory Game

- Find a page in a magazine full of various objects and take 1 minute to mindfully look over the page. After the minute is up, close the magazine and write down all of the things that you remember.

Mandalas and Coloring Books

- Meditate on the process of coloring, losing yourself in the activity

Hearing

Connect with a Sound

- Put on music; listen to the sounds of waves, nature, or another soothing sound; or pick up on the naturally occurring sounds around you (the hum of an appliance, the sound of traffic, or the bustle of a workplace). Close your eyes and tune in to your chosen sound. Stay with the sound, returning to it when a distraction happens, and perhaps notice how you breathe along with it.

Mindful Listening

- Pick a song, close your eyes, and listen closely to the music. Follow the lyrics, notice the different instruments, or take in the song as a whole experience. If you have heard the song before, did you notice anything new? Alternatively, pick a song that has a repetitive lyric, phrase, or melody line. Count how many times you hear the reoccurring detail.

Touch

Mindfulness of Touch

- Take any object into your hands. Explore the object with your hands and fingers, feeling the shape(s), texture(s), and temperature of the object. This can be done in combination with vision, or done with your eyes closed, focusing exclusively on touch.

Write with your Non-Dominant Hand

- Create an encouraging or coping statement and write it out 10 times with your non-writing hand. Notice any frustrations or judgments that come up and practice releasing them. Engage in the process, noting the level of focus needed to have the writing be legible.

Smell

Mindfulness of Smell

- Gather a variety of scented candles, essential oils, or objects and spend some time exploring the smell of each one. Notice the differences and any reactions you have to each kind of smell. Alternatively, disguise the labels on your candles or oils and see whether you or others can guess each scent.

Taste

Mindful Eating

- Strive to eat mindfully each time you sit down to eat. Notice your food, seeing the shapes, colors, and textures. Smell the aromas. Take it all in before experiencing your first small bite. Our taste buds register tastes more vividly during the first few bites. Eat these bites slowly, experiencing the tastes, smells, temperature, and textures of each bite. Chew slowly, noticing the release of flavors and the sensations associated with eating. Continue thoughtfully, deliberately, until you notice feeling satisfied, and then stop and reflect

Overall Senses

5,4,3,2,1 Senses

- To increase your awareness and ground yourself in the present moment, list five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.

Breathing Techniques

Breathing Colors

- Choose two different colors, one to breathe in and one to breathe out. Blue works well for the in-breath, since it matches the cool feeling of the air coming in. Red works well for the out-breath, as it matches the warm feeling of the air leaving your body. However, choose the colors you want, for the reasons you want. Close your eyes and pair each color with its breath.

Square Breathing

- Start by breathing in for four seconds. Hold your breath for four seconds, and then breathe out for another four seconds. Repeat four times.

Deep Breathing

- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. To increase focus and quiet the mind, you can use a mantra such as “in” for when you breathe in and “out” for when you breathe out.

Belly Breathing

- Lie down on your back on the floor or in a bed (preferred), or sit upright in a chair. Place a hand on your belly, and as you breathe in, watch how your belly expands. Breathing in this way promotes deep breathing, which helps to get oxygen into your system. More oxygen helps us relax our bodies and think more clearly. Set an alarm and breathe deeply for a minimum of 1 minute.

Miscellaneous

Gratitude Lists

- Make a gratitude list with everything you can think of on it, both big and small. Meditate on the list for several minutes. Note any changes in your emotions. Alternatively, write a thank-you letter to someone, being specific about what the person did to receive your gratitude.

Report on Your Experience or Surroundings

- Write or narrate what is happening right now with your emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and/or behavior. In doing so, pretend that you are a reporter giving an objective account to your audience. Notice what it is like to Observe and Describe your experience in this somewhat detached manner.

Explain a Task

- Take any daily task or chore, such as making coffee, sweeping a room, or watering plants, and break it down into its component steps. Imagine that you would have to explain how to do this to a child or even an alien, and go into extreme detail. Now, actually engage in the task or chore, noticing each step and participating in it mindfully.

Mindful Walking

- Take a walk around or outside your room. Pay attention to the sensation of your feet in contact with the ground. Let go of thoughts, emotions, and other distractions and just walk, as if being mindful of every step is vitally important. Alternatively, play a game and avoid cracks (or step on them) or count steps between fixed objects such as lights, doors, or picture frames.

Energy Ball

- Imagine a ball as a source of negative emotional and mental energy. Hold on to the ball in your hand and take some time to process what it is like to hold onto your negative energy. Do you want to continue to hold on to it? Tell yourself that you have the choice to let the ball go and put it down. Alternatively, decide to bounce the ball off the floor or wall, imagining the negative energy leaving the ball with each bounce, until the ball becomes neutral again.