

### What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means being present in the moment with your thoughts and feelings without making judgments. It is being aware of what is happening but not being overwhelmed. Practicing mindfulness on a regular basis can help you feel calmer, happier, and be more in tune with yourself.

People of all ages can practice mindfulness. Some practice mindfulness for different reasons too. If you get nervous before a test, it can help you calm down and regain your focus. If you struggle with controlling your anger, it can help you control your emotions. And if you just want to feel a bit happier (who doesn't?), it can help take away your negative thoughts

### How to Reduce Test Anxiety

- **Start studying early.** Cramming the night before a test only increases anxiety.
- **Mentally practice going through the test.** Visualize yourself walking into the classroom, taking the test, and confidently answering the questions.
- **Use positive “self-talk.”** Replace irrational and negative thoughts with thoughts that are positive (“I’ve studied hard – I can do this”).
- **Use relaxation techniques.** Take a deep breath. Breathe in, count to four, and breathe out. Repeat

### Steps to Practicing Mindfulness

- You need time and space for your practice. It doesn't have to be a lot of time, but you need to agree to set out some time for your practice.
- Observe the present moment. Mindfulness is all about living in the moment. That means not focusing on what happened yesterday or how you're going to study for your test tonight. Just focus on what is happening this very moment, second by second.
- Let your thoughts pass. Your mind is going to wander. When it happens, just breathe and let it go.
- Don't judge. Try not to make judgments about things being “good” or “bad” when you are practicing mindfulness. Instead, just take in the observations as experiences.

### Positive Effects of Mindfulness

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| ✓ Increases positive emotions        | ✓ Helps control emotions (including anger management) |
| ✓ Reduces stress                     | ✓ Reduces behavioral problems and aggression          |
| ✓ Boosts immune system               | ✓ Creates compassion and empathy for others           |
| ✓ Increases focus and attention      |   |
| ✓ Helps fight anxiety and depression |   |