



Recipe Cards

**Quick and Easy Ways to
Relax, Reset, and Recharge!**



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SMALL STEPS
EVERY DAY



We all deal with stress — and finding calm in our busy days can be a challenge. But the good news is there are small things we can do to help us recharge — any time of day, no matter where we are. Practicing mindfulness techniques, or “mindfulness meditation” for as little as a few minutes daily (or whenever we feel we need it) can help us manage stress and anxiety, slow down racing thoughts, and help us calm our minds and bodies, so we’re better able to deal with challenges.

Take a look at the following “recipes” for mindful meditation. Find one that you like and that works best for you when you need it. You may want to try a “recipe” when you wake up to reduce anxiety for the day, or at night to help you get better rest.

By doing them regularly, you’ll give your mind and body a chance to relax, recharge, and reset. And remember, always check with your doctor or healthcare practitioner to see if trying a new practice or exercise makes sense for you!

Body Scan



When we’re stressed or scared, our nervous system gets activated. This mindfulness meditation practice can help us calm our mind and bodies, stay in the present, and reduce anxiety. It can even help us sleep.

Step 1: Get in a comfortable position or lie down if you’re able. Try to avoid distractions. Close your eyes to keep your focus, and be conscious of your breaths.

Step 2: Start at your feet. Think about your feet and toes, and be aware of any sensations you may be feeling. For example, focus on the bottom of your feet, and how your feet feel resting against the floor (if you’re standing or sitting). Keep moving your focus up your body — to your heels, ankles, and beyond. Silently pause between each focus area. Try to think about each part of your body separately.

Step 3: If you notice yourself getting distracted or your mind drifting, gently return your attention to that part of your body and begin again, and focus on any sensations. Remember, there’s no minimum or maximum time limit — just try this recipe when it’s convenient.

Step 4: After going through each part of your body and completing your “scan,” take a moment to “link” each part of your body together. Feel your full body as a connected whole and be present in this moment. Focus on accepting your body as it is right now, without any emotional reactions or judgments, and continue breathing deeply to help your body and mind feel calm, at peace, present, and recharged.

Mix it up! A slightly different type of body scan is to incorporate “**progressive muscle relaxation**.” Take deep breaths and focus on each part of your body, but instead of feeling or observing sensations, try to clench or tense, then release each muscle until you feel a deeper state of relaxation and mind-body connection. This technique can be especially helpful if your body clenches up or aches when you’re stressed, e.g. in your neck or shoulders.



Box Breathing

aka Four-Square Breathing



If you're in a high-pressure or scary situation, or you simply need to take a breath, try the "box breathing" technique to help reset your breathing rhythm, calm and recenter yourself, and even lift your mood. Do it anywhere, anytime!

Before you start, find a comfortable place to sit if you're able. Try to close your eyes. If you're sitting, keep your hands relaxed in your lap with palms facing up, and focus on your posture — sitting up straight can help you take deep breaths. Try picturing a box or square as you follow these steps.

Step 1: Slowly **exhale** through your mouth for 4 seconds, and focus on getting all the oxygen out of your lungs.

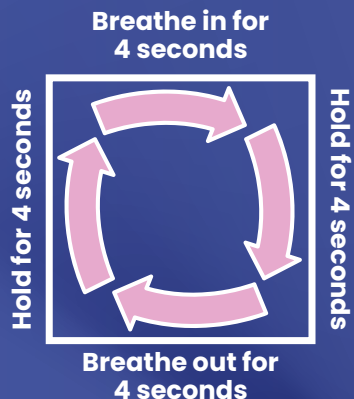
Step 2: **Inhale** through your nose and slowly take a deep breath for 4 seconds.

Step 3: **Hold** your breath, and count to 4 in your head.

Step 4: **Exhale** again, on a count of 4, getting all the breath out of your lungs and belly.

Step 5: **Hold** your breath again for a count of 4. Repeat this process of **inhale-hold-exhale-hold** like you're moving around a box.

Repeat as often as needed.



Five Senses

The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique



If you only have a minute or two, you can try this exercise to keep yourself present and regain your calm. Follow as many of the steps as you're able.



Step 1: Look around for **five** things you **see**. Prioritize things you might usually overlook, like the way the light is coming to you, or some unique color or shape.

Step 2: Notice **four** things you can **feel**. This could be as easy as the table or chair you're sitting on, the feel of your clothes, or if you're outside, the breeze or the sun shining on you.

Step 3: Notice **three** things you can **hear**. Is there something you haven't heard before? This can be the humming of your fridge, your heartbeat, a distant plane, or even the steady sound of traffic.

Step 4: Notice **two** things you can **smell**. Pay attention to any smells around you — pleasant and unpleasant alike. It could be a scent you're wearing, the smell of your home, or the smell of the air carried by the wind.

Step 5: Notice **one** thing you can **taste** in this moment. It could mean taking a sip of a drink you have, tasting a bite of food, or even noticing the lack of any taste.

After going through these steps, open your eyes. Be mindful of your thoughts, and notice them without any judgment. This exercise can help with stress relief and focusing your attention and being present, especially if you're experiencing any overwhelming emotions.



Mindful Movement

Mindful movement is about being aware of how your body feels as you move; but often, we're distracted by multi-tasking, looking at our phones, or just trying to get from point A to point B. When we move and tune into our bodies, we also calm our nervous systems. This can, in turn, lower our heart rates, blood pressure, and our fight-or-flight responses in moments of stress.

Mindful movement isn't necessarily about working out or forcing yourself to go for a walk. Instead, it can be as simple as stretching, adjusting your posture, or paying attention to how your body feels. Here are some easy tips to get started.

Step 1: Pause and consider what type of mindful movement you want to do. For example, dancing by yourself at home, doing a workout, going for a walk, or doing some stretching after sitting all day.

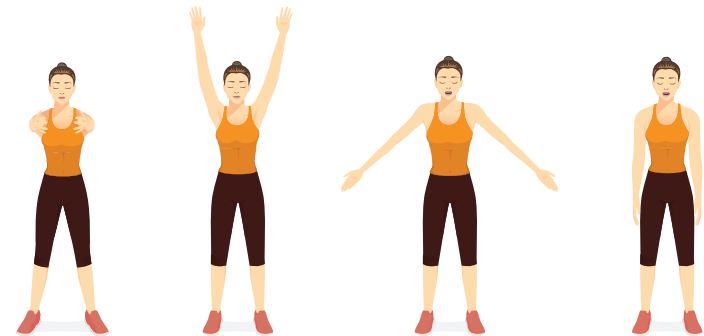
Step 2: Unplug and focus. Regardless of what movement you're doing, make sure you're focused and not distracted by a screen such as a phone or TV. Mindful movement is about focusing just on the thing you're doing right here, right now.

Step 3: Use your breath as a guide for mindful movement. For example, if you're stretching, you can inhale as you start each stretch and focus on deep breaths while you hold the stretch. If you're walking, use your breath to guide your steps. Find a rhythm that works for you.

Step 4: Focus on your awareness. As you practice mindful movement and notice your thoughts, try focusing your attention on what's around you. How does the air feel? How does your body feel? How does your heartbeat sound?

If you're short on time, here are 2 quick mindful movements to try out:

Dynamic mountain stretch: Separate your feet hip-width apart. Inhale and reach both your arms forward then overhead. As you exhale, reach your arms out to the sides, then down. Repeat this movement for three breaths.



Dynamic mountain stretch

Tree pose: Begin this common yoga pose by standing. Bend one knee and place the foot of that leg against the inner thigh of your other leg. If it's too difficult to balance on one foot, that's ok! Skip that part. Next, bring your hands together and focus on taking deep breaths, being mindful of keeping your weight balanced on your foot. Keep your toes relaxed and spread out. Gaze at a fixed object while you breathe. This mindful movement can help you find stillness, balance, and focus.



Tree pose

progress is
personal





More resources

More ways to practice:

Want to go deeper? You can always find additional mindfulness meditation exercises, guides, and more by searching platforms like YouTube and Spotify.

Need someone to talk to?

If you're struggling or just need support, you're not alone. These free resources are available anytime:

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988 anytime to connect with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — free, confidential, and available 24/7.

CalHOPE Connect

Chat at calhopeconnect.org or call (833) 317-HOPE (4673) for 24/7 non-emergency support.

