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A quick fix. Studies show regular practice over time is necessary to experience benefits.

About "emptying your mind" or trying to stop thoughts or feelings.

About changing your state of mind to one that is blissful or relaxed.

Based on religion or prayer, although it may have some elements in common with many religious practices.

Easy to figure out on your own. Most people need guidance and help to get started and to move past difficulties.



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When trying these exercises...

Be in a place that is quiet, where you won't be interrupted.

Choose a posture that is comfortable and balanced but dignified.

It can help to close your eyes, but it isn't necessary if it makes you uncomfortable.

Have something to focus your attention on that you keep coming back to. This is usually your own breathing, but it can also be a word, phrase, or a counting pattern.

Be curious about what comes up for you during the exercises, without judging the experience as "good" or "bad."

**There is more information about how to practice in the color brochure.



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The "Seven Essentials" of Mindfulness

- 1. NON-JUDGING: Be a curious witness to your experience. Observing without judging helps you to see what is on your mind without trying to avoid, edit, or "over think" your thoughts!
- 2. NON-STRIVING: There is no goal other than to be yourself. It is not about achieving bliss, relaxation, absence of thought, etc.
- 3. ACCEPTANCE: By fully accepting what each moment has to offer, you are able to experience life much more completely.
- 4. LETTING GO: Of thoughts, ideas, things, events, desires, views, hopes, and experiences. Allowing things to be as they are, without getting caught up in our attachment or rejection of them. It means to give up resisting or struggling against yourself. Watching your breath as it goes in and out is an excellent starting point.
- 5. BEGINNER'S MIND: Free of expectations from past experience. Use your breath as an anchor to tether your attention to the present moment. It is always there.
- 6. PATIENCE: Remembering that things must unfold in their own time. An alternative to the mind's restlessness and impatience.
- 7. TRUST: In yourself and your feelings. As a human you carry great innate wisdom and knowledge of your own self and experience. Trust yourself to observe your



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Five Common Challenges in Mindfulness

- 1. Aversion: "I don't want this _____" (Feeling, activity, thought, etc.)
- Craving: "I want to be doing _____" (rather than experiencing the present)
- 3. Restlessness: "I must move around, I can't sit still any longer!"
- 4. Sleepiness: Drifting off during exercises.
- 5. Doubt: "I can't do this" or "This won't help me, I'm wasting my time."

When you experience thoughts like these during practice, just notice and try to label them. Having these thoughts is OK and doesn't mean your mindfulness practice isn't working. Most people have these types of thoiughts during practice. Noticing and labeling, and returning to your breathing or other focus, can help you move past the challenge. If you simply must stop sooner than you intended, try to observe your own impulse and make your choice deliberately.



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