

Bring on the Calm!

Working for the Federal Government can be stressful. What makes it so challenging? The mission-driven nature of many federal positions can add stress and anxiety to federal roles. The very nature of some roles such as air traffic control, overseas assignments, and border control have stressful aspects built right in.

The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates these issues. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll, nearly half of all Americans report that the Coronavirus crisis is impacting their mental health. While most federal employees are full-time teleworking, in many cases they are trying to balance simultaneous work, caregiving, and children's at-home learning.

Mindfulness can help!

Federal government employees want resources to help them cope, even thrive, amidst these challenging times, but they are largely absent. In its first-ever Work-Life survey, conducted in 2017, The Federal Government's Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reported that while 30% of federal employees surveyed desired stress management programming from their agency, only 3% reported access to this programming.

A Mindfulness Toolkit

This toolkit was created by federal employee participants in the [Excellence in Government Fellows program](#) through the [Partnership for Public Service](#). Follow the links above to:

A [30-day Mindfulness Journey](#) -- Get started with an introduction to mindfulness principles, practices, and techniques, using the Mindfulness Coach app created with support from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.*

Links to additional [federal mindfulness resources](#) to support your practice.

Let's help each other thrive!

*If you experience negative effects from mindfulness activities, discontinue your practice. People with existing mental health conditions should speak with a healthcare provider before beginning a mindfulness practice.



30-Day Mindfulness Journey

Welcome to the 30-day Mindfulness Journey. During this journey, you will learn basic mindfulness techniques, reflect on your experience, and develop structures for a long-term mindfulness practice. You can return to this page each day or download the Journey as a pdf [here](#) and print. Enjoy!

Day 1

Welcome to Day 1 of the 30-day Mindfulness Journey! During the next 30 days you will learn about aspects of mindfulness and have an opportunity to practice them. Plan to set aside 15 minutes each day for these activities. Throughout the month you'll use a free app called Mindfulness Coach, developed by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs. You'll also explore other kinds of mindfulness such as journaling, expressing gratitude, and more. You may want to have a notebook to write in over the month.

1. Please take a quick **pre-survey**.
2. Download the Mindfulness Coach app to your smartphone from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android). Once you have successfully downloaded the app and can open it on your smartphone, you have completed Day 1! See you tomorrow!

Day 2

Welcome to Day 2. Today, you'll cover the basics of mindfulness, complete an assessment, and try a 1-minute seated practice. Here we go!

1. Open the Mindfulness Coach App on your smartphone and click the Training button on the lower left of the home screen.
2. Read through the four one-minute Build Your Expertise primers starting with "What is Mindfulness." After you've finished the last primer, "Spirit of Mindfulness", click on "Rate your level of mindfulness mastery" to complete a pre-assessment.
3. When you've completed the assessment, click on "Seated Practice" to complete your first seated practice of the month!
4. In your notebook, write one word to describe your Seated Practice.

Day 3

Welcome to Day 3. Today you will focus on...focus.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are now at Level 2.
2. Read through the three Build Your Expertise primers on attention, wandering minds, and being in the present.
3. Try out what you've learned by completing the Seated Practice (3 mins).

Day 4

Welcome to Day 4. Today you continue focusing on focus.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training.
2. Complete the Awareness of the Breath seated practice (8 mins)
3. In your notebook, describe something you noticed about your breath during the Seated Practice.

Day 5

Welcome to Day 5. Today you'll explore how mindfulness works.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are now on Level 3.
2. Read through the three Build Your Expertise primers "How Mindfulness Works", "Qualities of Mindfulness", and "Letting Go of Suffering".
3. In your notebook, write down any of the qualities of mindfulness described in the second primer you would like to cultivate. In what situations could these qualities help you?
4. Complete the Seated Practice. (3 mins). **Note:** You can skip the introduction to each Seated Practice by deselecting it.

Day 6

Welcome to Day 6. Today you continue with a short, seated practice and reflection.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training.
2. Complete the Awareness of the Senses seated practice in level 3. (11 mins)
3. Mindfulness practices help us to notice things we often take for granted. In your notebook, list something you noticed through each of your senses during today's practice.

Day 7

Welcome to Day 7. Today you continue with a focus on mindfulness and the body.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are now on Level 4.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "How a Body Scan Can Be Helpful".
3. Complete the Awareness of Body seated practice. (13 mins)

Day 8

Welcome to Day 8. Today you will learn about the importance of regular mindfulness practice, and bust some myths about mindfulness.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 4.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primers "Importance of Frequent Practice" and "Mindfulness Practice Myths".
3. In your notebook, write down any myths you held about mindfulness that were addressed in the "myths" primer.
4. Complete the Seated Practice. (4 mins)

Day 9

Welcome to Day 9. Today you will "automate" a mindful habit.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 5.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Integrating Mindfulness into Daily Life".
3. In your notebook, write down a way you will "automate" or remind yourself to practice mindfulness during the day. Examples include setting a reminder on your smartphone to take a "mindful minute", or placing a sticker on your computer monitor to remind you to notice your immediate surroundings. What will you do?

Day 10

Welcome to Day 10. Today you'll set a mindfulness goal for yourself.

1. Open the Mindfulness Coach app and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 5.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Setting a Mindfulness Goal".
3. In your notebook, write down the mindfulness goal you are setting for yourself.
4. Complete the Seated Practice. (5 mins)

Day 11

Congratulations! You've completed 10 days of the Mindfulness Journey! Today you'll switch gears to focus on gratitude, or mindfulness of the positive aspects of your life.

1. In your notebook, take three minutes to list as many things as you can that you are grateful for today. Read over the list. Take it in.
2. Is there a person on your list you might express gratitude to today? Go for it!

Day 12

Welcome to Day 12. Today you'll investigate judgmental thinking.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 6.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Letting Go of Judgmental Thoughts".
3. Complete the Seated Practice. (6 minutes)

Day 13

Welcome to Day 13. Today you'll practice mindful looking.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 6.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindful Looking".
3. Complete the Mindful Looking Practice referencing a photo in the app or on your smartphone. (5 minutes)

Day 14

Welcome to Day 14. Today you'll practice mindful listening.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 6.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindful Listening".
3. Complete the Mindful Listening Practice, trying at least two of the soundscapes provided.

Day 15

Welcome to Day 15. Today you'll explore practicing self-compassion.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 7.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primers "Be Aware of Your Inner Critic" and "Be Compassionate to Yourself".
3. In your notebook, spend a few minutes reflecting on the primers. Do you have an inner critic? If so, what is it saying to you? How can you practice compassion for yourself when your inner critic speaks up?
4. Complete the Seated Practice. (7 mins)

Day 16

Welcome to Day 16. Today you'll practice mindful walking.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 7.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindful Walking"
3. Complete the Mindful Walking Practice. (7 mins)
4. Complete the Assessment.

Day 17

Welcome to Day 17. Today you'll learn some ways to overcome challenges to mindfulness.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 8.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primers "When Your Mind Makes It Difficult for Mindfulness" and "Succeeding at Mindfulness".
3. In your notebook, describe one challenge to mindfulness you've encountered during the past 17 days. Was it difficult to find the time to sit down and focus? Were you distracted by someone in the middle of your practice? Describe a way you could overcome this challenge in the future.
4. Complete the Seated Practice. (8 mins)

Day 18

Welcome to Day 18. Today you'll try mindful eating.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 8.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindful Eating".
3. Complete the Mindful Eating Practice. (8 mins)

Day 19

Welcome to Day 19. Today you'll work on recognizing and being mindful of emotions.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 9.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindfulness of Emotional Discomfort".
3. Complete the Mindfulness of Emotional Discomfort Practice. (12 mins)

Day 20

Welcome to Day 20. Today you'll consider the importance of mindfulness as an ongoing practice.

1. Open the Mindfulness Coach app and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 9.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Mindfulness of Emotional Discomfort Part 2".
3. Complete the Seated Practice. (9 mins)

Day 21

Welcome to Day 21 and congratulations on completing two-thirds of the Journey! You are already well on your way to developing a mindfulness habit. Today we return to gratitude as an expression of mindfulness. In your notebook, consider a colleague or supervisor you are grateful for. What qualities do they possess? What specific actions have they taken that you are grateful for? Consider letting them know of your gratitude today.

Day 22

Welcome to Day 22. Today you'll consider how to be mindful of pain.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 10.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Physical (and Emotional) Pain".
3. Complete the Seated Practice. (10 mins)

Day 23

Welcome to Day 23. Today you'll continue learning about mindfulness of pain.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 10.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Strategy for Painful Emotions".
3. Complete the "Mindfulness of Emotional Discomfort Part 2" Seated Practice. (12 mins)

Day 24

Welcome to Day 24. Today you'll practice the very important mindfulness skill of returning from distraction.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 11.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Remember, It's (not) Easy".
3. Complete the Seated Practice. (11 mins)

Day 25

Welcome to Day 25 of the Mindfulness Journey. Today you'll practice labeling thoughts and emotions.

1. Open the Mindfulness Coach app and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 11.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Labeling an Emotion or Negative Thought".
3. Create your own timed Seated Practice with the following steps:
 - Click on the Practice icon at the bottom of the app.
 - Click on Seated Practice.
 - Toggle off Introduction.
 - Under Time, adjust the number of minutes to your desired length.
 - Under Tone, select the sound you would like to hear at the end of your practice.
 - Click Start and complete your Seated Practice.

You can use this timer any time you'd like to complete a Seated Practice.

Day 26

Welcome to Day 26 of the Mindfulness Journey. In these last few days of the Journey, you will turn your attention outward, practicing mindfulness toward others.

1. Open the Mindfulness Coach app and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 12.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primers "Mindfulness of Others" and "Practicing Acceptance".
3. Complete Building Compassion Seated Practice. (11 mins)

Day 27

Welcome to Day 27 of the Mindfulness Journey. Today you will consider listening to others as a form of mindfulness.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 13.
2. Complete the Build Your Expertise primer "Being a Genuine Listener".
3. In your notebook, write down a person for whom you would like to be a better listener.
4. Complete the Seated Practice (13 mins).

Day 28

Welcome to Day 28. You are almost finished with the 30-day Mindfulness Journey! Today, you'll put some structures in place to help you continue your practice.

In your notebook, write down a time and place where you've found it most convenient to practice mindfulness daily. Do you like to practice in the kitchen early in the morning before others wake up? In your bedroom, just before going to bed? In your office or home office over your lunch break? Finding a convenient time and a comfortable place to practice is key to continuing. What has worked best for you during the Journey?

Day 29

Welcome to Day 29. Today, you'll set intentions for future mindfulness practice.

1. Open the [Mindfulness Coach app](#) and click on Mindfulness Training. You are on Level 14.
2. Complete the final Seated Practice (14 mins) and self-evaluation.
3. In your notebook, write down your intentions for your mindfulness practice moving forward. Will you try a short, seated practice every day? Will you include a "Mindful Moment" each day before beginning work? Will you focus on the present while making meals? How will you continue to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life?

Day 30

Congratulations! You're just moments away from completing the 30-day Mindfulness Journey! Today you'll discover some additional resources that can support you to continue your practice.

- **Explore the Mindfulness Coach app.** It offers many additional resources beyond those you have completed during the 30-day Journey. From the home screen of the Mindfulness Coach app, click on Practice Now and select All from the top menu. Scroll down to Additional Tools Available for Download for a wealth of additional guided mindfulness practices you can work with.
- **Try practicing with others.** Consider participating in the Smithsonian Asian Art Museum's online live practices which take place every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12:00-12:30 PM ET. You can join the practices via Zoom here:
https://smithsonian.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5YscuGprljQbviGSRDT8R4YRes8_sN6g
- **Additional resources** are listed in the Resources section of this Mindfulness.

To complete your Journey today:

1. Please complete a brief **post-survey**
2. Share the [30-Day Mindfulness Journey link](#) with a friend or colleague.

We hope you've developed skills that can help you meet the challenges of your work and personal life, and that you have begun a mindfulness practice that will extend into the future. Thank you for participating.



Mindfulness Resources

1. Smithsonian Asian Art Museum – Mindfulness Workshops
<https://asia.si.edu/events-overview/workshops/>
2. Air Force Spouse Resilience
<https://www.resilience.af.mil/Programs/Spouse-Resilience/Mindfulness/>
3. Homeland Security Mindfulness
<https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/mindfulness>
4. Army Public Health Center (APHC) - Mindfulness
<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/bh/Pages/Mindfulness.aspx>
5. NIH Work/Life Balance-Mindfulness
<https://wellnessatnih.ors.od.nih.gov/worklife/Pages/MIndfullness.aspx>
6. Department of Interior Drop-In Mindfulness (DOI employees only)
<https://www.doi.gov/library/programs/meditation>
7. Journal of Medical Internet Research -- assessment database of over 250 Mindfulness apps
<https://apps.digitalpsych.org/>
8. 30-Day Mindfulness Journey PDF
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-16QVyyPH8zvrgnDY-lfIQSTBKNeCyia>