

Mindfulness and Yoga Program

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Keep up to date with mindfulness Tweets:

[@ThaiYogaMass](https://twitter.com/ThaiYogaMass)

“You can’t stop the waves, but
you can learn to surf.”



A Definition of Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening

in mind and body,

in the present moment,

and to notice thoughts, reactions and judgments,

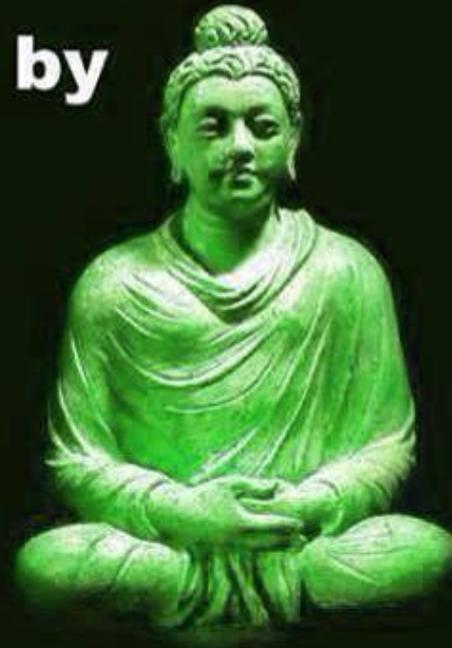
and to use the breath as an anchor to return to.

Mindfulness

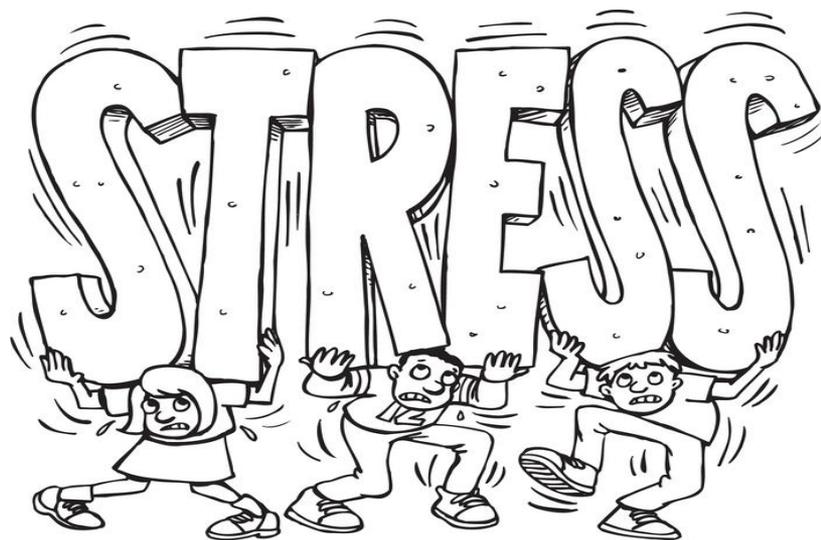
- Mindfulness is a very simple form of meditation. A typical meditation consists of focussing your full attention on your breath as it flows in and out of your body. Focussing on each breath in this way allows you to observe your thoughts as they arise in your mind and, little by little, to let go of struggling with them. You come to the profound understanding that thoughts and feelings (including negative ones) are transient. They come and they go, and ultimately, you have a choice about whether to act on them or not.
- In essence, mindfulness is about observation of what is going on internally and externally; and aiming to develop compassion.

MEDITATION

**Because some questions
can't be answered by
Google!**



- Over time, mindfulness brings about long-term changes in mood and levels of happiness and wellbeing. Scientific studies have shown that mindfulness affects the autonomic nervous system. It also positively affects the brain patterns underlying day-to-day anxiety, stress, depression and irritability so that when they arise, giving one tools to deal with them.
- Studies in science are proving that breathing links to the autonomic nervous system and the messages that the brain send the body.



Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic	Parasympathetic
Fight and flight	Relaxation
Anabolic	Catabolic
Meets immediate survival needs	Meets long-term well-being needs
Helps to mobilize energy	Involved in restoration of energy

These two systems have a profound affect on our biology, and are responsive to functions of the body, including heart-rate, digestion and respiration.

Automatic Pilot

- In a car, we can sometimes drive for miles on automatic pilot without really being aware of what we are doing. In the same way, we may not be really present, moment by moment, for much of our lives. We can often be miles away, without knowing it.
- On automatic pilot, we are more likely to have our buttons pressed: events around us and thoughts, feelings and sensations in the mind (of which we may be only dimly aware) can trigger old habits of thinking that are often unhelpful and may lead to worsening mood.
- By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and body sensations, from moment to moment, we give ourselves the possibility of greater freedom and choice; we do not have to go into the same old mental ruts that may have caused problems in the past.

Inspirations from Thich Nhat Hanh

“If you’re happy, you cannot be a victim of your happiness.
But if you’re successful, you can be a victim of your success.”

“There is no way to happiness; happiness is the way.”

- Thich Nhat Hanh

I highly recommend this article for those of you who are interested in mindfulness and business:

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/thich-nhat-hanh-mindfulness-google-tech>

- We can regain our freedom if, as a first step, we simply acknowledge the actuality of our situation, without immediately being hooked into automatic tendencies to judge, fix, or want things to be other than they are. The body scan exercise provides an opportunity to practice simply bringing an interested and friendly awareness to the way things are in each moment, without having to do anything to change things.
- There is no goal to be achieved other than to bring awareness to bear as the instructions suggest – specifically, achieving some special state of relaxation is not a goal of the exercise.

Tips for Mindful Meditation

- Regardless of what happens (e.g. if you fall asleep, lose concentration, keep thinking of other things or focussing on the wrong part of the body, or not feeling anything), just do it! These are your experiences in the moment, just be aware of them.
- If your mind is wandering a lot, simply note the thoughts (as passing events) and then bring the mind gently back to the mindful practice.
- Let go of ideas of 'success' and 'failure'. This is not a competition. It is not a skill for which you need to strive. Just do it with an attitude of openness and curiosity.

Mindfulness of the Breath

Following the wave of the breath, each exhalation brings us to the present moment.

- Breath is life. You could think of the breath as being like a thread or chain that links and connects all the events of your life. The breath is always there every moment, moving by itself like a river.
- Have you ever noticed how the breath changes with our moods – short and shallow when we're tense or angry, faster when we're excited, slow and full when we're happy, and almost disappearing when we're afraid? It's there with us all the time. It can be used as a tool, like an anchor, to bring stability to the body and mind when we deliberately choose to become aware to it. We can tune into it at any moment during everyday life.



“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.”

— Herophilus