

Treatment Tools

Mindfulness of Walking



Many people might think that practising mindfulness is something that requires you to be sitting with eyes closed, focusing on your breath or thoughts. This is not always the case. Mindfulness is not something we have to add to our lives but a way of being, that we can practise while doing anything. Below is a step-by-step guide for a walking mindfulness activity.

What does mindfulness help with?

Regular mindfulness practice helps to develop a center of awareness that we can turn to in stressful or difficult times. Mindfulness helps us to live in the present moment, without adding extra thoughts about past regrets or future worries. Some people find that mindfulness activities involving movement are especially helpful in this way.

Getting ready to start the activity

This activity can be done alone or with a group. You can practise it anywhere – but it can be helpful to start somewhere inside with enough space to walk around the room in a circle. In group settings, it can also be helpful if facilitators have access to a bell (or similar) to indicate the end of this activity, although this is not essential.

Instructions

The following script can be used in group situations or by individuals. Individuals may wish to read it beforehand or record it and listen while completing the activity. In group settings, the group facilitator may wish to read the following script to group members:

- *Introduce mindfulness of walking*
- *Instruct participants to form a circle and spread evenly around the room*
- *Note that participants will be walking in a clockwise direction around the edge of the room*
- *Remind them to keep their attention to the physical sensation of walking, while also looking out for objects and people!*

“These instructions will guide you through the whole process.

Notice any physical sensations in your body...

Bring your awareness to the sensation of your feet being grounded on the floor...

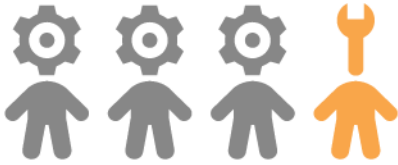
Simply try to feel the way that your feet carry your weight, and the way that they connect to the ground...like a curious explorer try to notice even the smallest sensations in your feet...

... [30 second pause]

In a moment we'll begin walking...

Simply begin by walking at a natural pace that perhaps feels a bit slower than usual – but feel free to experiment with whatever pace helps you feel most tuned in to your walking...





Treatment Tools

Imagine you're going on a relaxing stroll, simply placing one foot after the other...Notice everything you can about the sensations in your body as you walk...

... [30 second pause]

If you become lost in thought or distracted by something else in the room, you can just recognise that and begin to focus on your walking again...

After some time, if you wish and it seems right, you may slow down somewhat. Feel the sensations of your leg going up, going down. Heaviness, lightness, pressure, hardness, softness...

Again and again, your attention will wander – that's alright, it's just what minds do... bring your focus back to the present...

Again, after some time if you wish, you can slow down even more. Not so much that you lose your balance, but enough so that you can really feel the sensations of movement. Lifting, moving, placing, shifting your weight. And then the next leg: Lifting, moving, placing, shifting...

If you notice your attention wandering, it's perfectly alright. You can recognise that and let go, and you can bring your attention back...It's a very light attention, a light awareness to experiencing the sensations of each step. You can still hear and see what's going on around you...

... [30 second pause]

It doesn't matter how much your mind wanders – simply practise gently returning your attention to the natural rhythm of your walking whenever you notice this.

... [30 second pause]

At the sound of the bell, we will gently stop walking. As you finish walking and come to a standing position, take a few moments to notice the way that your body feels.

[Sound bell and finish activity]

After the activity

In some group situations, it may be helpful for facilitators to guide a discussion regarding the experiences of group members in participating in this mindful walking activity. Some participants may have found it easy to tune in whereas others might discuss various things that were distracting. Whatever comes up, it may be helpful for facilitators to curiously explore whatever participants experienced during the activity.