

# Mindfulness





# What is mindfulness?



In the picture, the dog is being mindful and just focusing on what is right there in its present experience. The person is caught up in their thoughts and missing the simple pleasure of experiencing the present moment - the sun on their face and the view of the trees.

**Mindfulness is about being fully aware of living, right now, in this moment. Research has shown that being mindful is good for us. It can have long term benefits for our health and happiness.**

## Being mindful



Being mindful is simply about being more aware of our senses and paying attention to the little things that we so often ignore.

For example, the smell of freshly cut grass, the sound of birds singing, the sensation of rain on our face, or the feeling of anger or joy in our body.

It is also about taking time to be aware of all the good things in your life - all the good things surrounding you right now like family, friends, your home, the food you have to eat, your pet, etc. This doesn't mean you can't have goals or want your life to be better. But if you spend too much time thinking about what you don't have yet, it can make you feel unhappy and stressed.



## Ways to be mindful

- Sit quietly doing nothing for a short amount of time and observe your breath going in and out.
- Have a go at yoga or Tai chi.
- Take time to eat quietly and slowly, savouring every bite, thinking about where the food has come from and how it tastes and feels in your mouth.
- Take time to go for a walk outside, not going too fast and noticing everything around you - really looking at things, and hearing all the sounds around you.

# Activity



## The WOW! Factor

What are the things that fill you with wonder? Is it a rainbow, how you breathe, a new-born baby, a mountain, the sea, a butterfly, a forest of bluebells, a whale? You can do this next exercise in a group or on your own.

What you need:

- Paper or thin card
- Thick and thin felt tips.

What you do:

- Make a big cartoon-style 'WOW!' in the middle of your sheet of paper.
- Use bright colours to make your 'WOW!' and draw one of those zig-zaggy shapes around it with a thick felt tip so it looks like a word from a cartoon.
- Think about all the things that fill you with wonder and make you want to say 'WOW!' and all the things that give you a special tingly feeling when you think about them.
- Maybe your 'WOW!'s are things in nature, or being loved in a special way, or doing something amazing, or a new baby, or being in a beautiful place. Maybe they are rainbows or crashing waves, or bees, or being on a mountain. Maybe they are being close to a waterfall, being hugged, a special piece of music, a tree, or being in a place of worship.
- Write or draw your 'WOW!'s or moments of wonder all around your 'WOW!' word.

