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# Mindfulness for Insomnia and Sleep Disorders

Mindfulness promotes emotional and physical health, reduces stress, and supports sleep. It can improve your quality of life and optimize tissue repair during the day and at night.

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Awareness leads to **mindfulness**, which can help create a path to a place where calm and relaxation are in balance with sleep, active living, and optimal fitness. Daytime mindfulness activities can improve overall health and contribute to a healthy, deep rest. When less time is spent worrying and focus is redirected from the past or future to the present, a path is opened for improved health and sleep.

## Mindfulness Meditation and Its Benefits

**Mindfulness meditation** means focusing awareness on each moment, including the environment, as well as physical and emotional sensations. Mindfulness can assist with managing social relationships, economic concerns, and decision-making, as well as improving mental state.

Mindfulness meditation often uses either slow, intentional breathing or imagery to help to focus the thoughts. In studies, practicing mindfulness or mindfulness meditation before bed has led to benefits that include:

- Reduced insomnia
- Deeper sleep
- Fewer episodes of wakefulness during the night
- Improved mood and resilience
- Greater daytime energy
- Less anxiety



## How to Get Started

To practice mindfulness meditation, follow these steps:

- Select a quiet place where you can relax. Sit, stand, or lie down comfortably.
- Pay attention to the environment, listening to the sounds, smelling what is around you, and feeling the temperature of the room. Version 3 (image courtesy of 123rf)

*“Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment.” —Sogyal Rinpoche*

- Focus inward. Take several deep breaths, paying attention to how your body feels as you breathe. Let your eyes close as you become more relaxed.
- Scan your body and assess how you feel. Focus your awareness on the parts of your body that are tense or in pain. Breathe deeply and acknowledge the feeling without judging it.
- If desired, you can imagine your body becoming heavier, more anchored to the earth.
- Consider visualizing a location that makes you particularly happy. That could be a natural setting, a vacation spot you remember fondly, or a place where something good happened in your life.
- Let the thoughts flow. If you have anxious or worried thoughts, let each occurrence be an opportunity to observe the thought and let it go. Rather than fighting the thoughts, imagine standing still and letting the thoughts flow around you. Bring your attention back to your breath.
- If you are concerned about losing track of time, set a timer.
- Practice mindfulness meditation before you get ready for bed. Perhaps meditate before you brush your teeth, after shutting off your phone or computer, or while lying in bed ready to fall asleep. Make mindfulness meditation part of your routine.



*“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.” —Thich Nhat Hanh*

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Hanh TN. *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation*. Beacon Press; 2016:15.