

## Notes From a Therapist

Many people come into therapy believing they are "bad" at mindfulness or meditation or it does not work for them.

When people hear the word *mindfulness*, they often picture:

- Sitting still
- Focusing on your breath
- Clearing your mind
- Relaxing
- Doing a body scan
- Being calm and peaceful

However, mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now with curiosity and without judging yourself for it. Meditation is one way to practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness does not have to require a dedicated practice such as a quiet room, a meditation cushion, and 20 minutes of uninterrupted time. While this can be a wonderful way to start, it is not the only way. Some people find mindfulness becomes more sustainable when they weave it into activities they're already doing throughout the day.

You can practice mindfulness while:

- Drinking your morning coffee
- Walking to your car
- Washing dishes
- Petting your dog
- Playing with your child
- Waiting in line at the grocery store

The practice is not about adding one more thing to your to-do list. It is about bringing your attention to the moment you're already in.

Maybe you've thought:

- I keep getting distracted.
- I can't sit still.
- Nothing is happening.
- I don't think this is working.

When you notice your mind has wandered, you are practicing mindfulness. That moment is the practice. There is no ideal experience to have during a meditation. You don't need to force yourself to relax, stop thinking, or have a special insight. Just notice what comes up for you in the moment.

If you have trauma, anxiety, ADHD, or tend to disconnect from your body, some mindfulness practices may feel easier than others.

You might:

- Keep your eyes open
- Shift positions
- Take breaks
- Move your body
- Focus externally or internally, whatever feels more accessible

**The goal is to practice noticing.**

As you practice, rather than thinking "am I doing this right?" replace it with, "what am I noticing right now?"