

# MINDFULNESS

Do you find yourself often caught up in negative thought patterns that impact your mood and relationships, or struggling to focus and get clarity on things? Many studies have highlighted the benefits of developing a mindfulness practice.

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

A state of awareness  
No judgement

Noticing what's happening in the present moment ..In your mind (thoughts and feelings), body and surroundings (sights, sounds, smells and tastes)

A skill you can learn and practise

Rooted in Buddhism but you don't need to be spiritual to practise it

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Mindfulness doesn't work for everyone, but many people find it beneficial when practised regularly. fMRI scans show that changes in brain activity in subjects who have learned to meditate hold steady even when they're not meditating. Studies report benefits for:

#### STRESS

Reduces heart rate and blood pressure

#### SLEEP

Body scan technique especially helpful

#### RELATIONSHIPS

Increases emotional intelligence

#### PAIN

Changes the perception of pain and improves tolerance

#### COGNITION

Improves working memory, planning, decision making, creative thinking and focus

#### MOOD

Benefits shown in depression using MCBT - Mindfulness-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

#### ADDICTIONS

Helps to manage cravings for food, cigarettes, alcohol and other substances

#### GENERAL HEALTH

8 weeks of practice led to a change in the expression of 172 genes that regulate inflammation, circadian rhythms and glucose metabolism

## MINDFULNESS CHANGES YOUR PERCEPTIONS AND FEELINGS:

Become more self-aware, understand yourself better

Feel calmer and less stressed

Choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings

Cope better with difficult thoughts

Positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives

Stand back from our thoughts and start to see their patterns

Experience afresh things that you have been taking for granted

Be kinder towards yourself

## HOW TO PRACTISE?

Pick a regular time

Choose a technique that works for you

Simply observe your thoughts without judgment and let them go

Keep bringing your attention back if your mind starts to wander

An app or guided meditation can be helpful

## SOME TECHNIQUES TO CHOOSE FROM:

Breathing meditation

Movement (yoga, walking, T'ai chi)

Mindful eating

Body scan technique

Apply mindfulness to an everyday activity



# MOOD-BOOSTING NUTRIENTS

Some nutrients have been highlighted in studies for their strong connection with mood and mental wellbeing. When deficient in our diets, they can be linked with symptoms of depression or anxiety.

**So what foods should you stock up on and what does a good mood-boosting day look like?**

**Omega 3s**

Oily fish: salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, herring, trout.  
Free range meat, venison.  
Flaxseeds, walnuts, chia seeds

**Vitamin C**

Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, parsley, kiwis, blackcurrants, strawberries, lemons.

**Zinc**

Oysters and shellfish, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds, eggs, red meat, whole grains, ginger, pumpkin seeds.

**Magnesium**

Avocados, almonds, spinach and other green leafy veg, legumes, nuts and seeds, oats, dark chocolate, Epsom salts

**B Vitamins**

Chickpeas, chicken, tuna, cheese, brown rice, spinach, asparagus, cauliflower, nutritional yeast

**Vitamin D**

Sunshine, eggs, oily fish, mushrooms

**Wake up** **Breathe/ Meditate/ Exercise**

**Breakfast** **Omelette, spinach, mushrooms** **Oats with blueberries and seeds**

**Lunch** **Sardines, wholemeal toast, avocado, rocket** **Bean and vegetable soup**

**Walk outdoors: Sunshine and nature 'Vitamin N'**

**Snack** **Almonds** **Hummus & crudites**

**Dinner** **Chicken and veg stew** **Stir fry with tofu, broccoli, ginger**

**Before bed** **Switch off screens/ Epsom salts bath/ Relax**

**Drink water throughout the day.**

**Our brain contains 80% water.**