

# MINDFULNESS ENHANCES RESILIENCE



To be mindful is to be present; to be aware of and control your experience. The beauty of mindfulness is that it is universal, practical, and requires little to no resources. With practice, mindfulness becomes a mental habit, like muscle memory. Embody your awareness in the present moment to increase resilience, allowing you to bounce back from obstacles, disappointments and setbacks. Develop mindfulness and meditation practices or routines that fulfill your longing for a more balanced, healthy outlook and connection to self. Here are some tips to get started.

## REFLECT, BE PRESENT AND BREATHE

To be present in the moment takes self-discipline and practice. When you know what it feels like to truly be present, you will also become more aware of what it feels like when you are not. When not present it is usually because the mind is either thinking about the past or worrying about the future. When you catch yourself drifting away to the past or to the future, or when you feel too 'in your head', be still and bring your awareness to your breath. Breath is the quickest technique to bring yourself back to the here and now and can help you deal with stress, anxiety, and negative emotions as well as sharpen your ability to concentrate. There are many breathing exercises online and even some that provide guided videos for you. One exercise in particular, is belly breathing, where you bring your breath all the way down to your belly when you inhale. Inhale for 7 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, then exhale for 7 seconds. Repeat this process 7 more times.

## MEDITATION

Meditation is another exercise you can use to cultivate mindfulness and increase resilience. There are many physiological, emotional, and mental benefits of meditation. It is not an intimidating practice to develop, but it does take discipline. While meditation does not come to us naturally, especially during times of stress and change, with practice it does become a habit like exercising or drinking water. We must work at being still, being silent. It is a myth that we must make our thoughts stop during meditation, instead just be aware of the thoughts that show up. See them pass through your mind. Watch them move on, those that are truly important will come back later. You are not your thoughts, you are the observer of your thoughts in your meditation.

There is no proper way to sit or length of time or frequency required for meditation. Simply do what is viable for you. Some people start out with a few minutes per day, two to three days per week and others practice daily. Utilizing an app like Insight Timer can be helpful for ensuring you stick to your goals. There are also guided meditations on various topics, different voices and music genres available based on what you want to focus on.

## RESPECT YOUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE

In any given moment you are having a human experience, some of which you will perceive as positive and others as negative. In especially difficult times, it is our resilience that gives us the capacity to go with the flow and the strength and determination to get back up and keep going when we have been knocked down. While it takes practice, mindfulness and awareness, the power lies within all of us to be resilient. There is a lesson in every human experience if we listen and look for it.