

Daily Practice Card

Mindfulness Procedure for Stress Reduction

This is a general purpose 'mindfulness' routine for reducing the amount of stress we carry in our bodies due to a variety of concerns we may have regarding tense and tight muscular conditions in various areas of our body such as jaw, back, hip, leg, head, etc. Also, the same mindfulness procedure is useful for more specific concerns such as overeating due to stress, binge drinking, smoking, and so forth.

The point of mindfulness practice is to avoid becoming caught up in any thoughts, feelings, cravings or urges that are dominating our mind in an endless stress-producing cycle. This negative cycle is sustained by our 'identification' with the controlling thought-feelings. It's because we identify with and therefore take them 'personally' that we get caught up in dominating thoughts and feelings.

The procedure consists of 6 sequential steps that will take between 5 to 10 mins to do. Ideally, you should try to do this mindfulness practice at least 3 times a day so that it becomes embedded as a good mental habit through the *neuroplasticity* (ie. neurons that fire together, wire together) of the brain.

Step 1: Quiet Place

Find a quiet place to practice undisturbed for 5 to 10 mins.

Step 2: Stress-up!

Clinch your fists into a tight ball. Hold for count of 10. Then slowly release them while breathing out with a *long* sigh.

Step 3: Focus on Breathing

Take 3 more deep breaths while paying attention to breathing in & out in a *slow, rhythm* way.

Step 4: Notice the 'Stress Area'

Notice which area of your body has the strongest or most stressful *feeling* (or '*urge*', like craving something such as food, drink, smoke, etc.).

Step 5: Surf the 'Stress Point'

Stress is like a wave, it rises and falls. Keep paying attention to your bodily 'stress point' while riding it like a surfboard all the way from its curving crest up then descending down the front of the stress wave all the way to the beach as it bottoms out.

Step 6: Stay in the 'Observation Zone'

As you 'surf a stress point, *observe*¹ what thought-feelings arise moment by moment while bringing them into conscious awareness by repeatedly asking yourself '*what is happening in my mind and body right now?*' Also, mentally note - '*what is interesting about this?*'

The key aim of this practice of 'mindfully' *noting, observing, and becoming aware* of problematic thought-feelings in a non-identified manner, is that the very act of such unconcerned awareness decouples the intensity and level of personal identification we have with dominating thought-feelings the point where we become disinterested in them and hence reduce the stress and mental hold they have over us.

Life Philosophy

'Travel lightly in all things in this world, for you are only a pilgrim passing through.' Geoff Dean

¹ In quantum physics, at the subatomic level, the 'observer effect' means the very act of observation changes what is being observed. Similarly, the very act of 'mindful' observation effects the problematic thought-feelings you notice and become aware of 'in your mind.'