

## STRATEGIES FOR PRACTICING MINDFULNESS AT WORK

1. ***Before leaving home:*** Anchor your day with quiet time and/or a contemplative morning practice. Even if the only quiet time you can manage is a minute alone in the bathroom, devote your full attention to yourself for those 60 seconds. You might even read a mindfulness poem!
2. ***Before entering work:*** Take some deep breaths and consciously relax. Observe your breath coming in and going out, *without controlling it*. Let your attention rest on your breath as a boat on calm water. Now, set your intention to be as present as possible during the day.
3. ***At work (this, and the tips that follow):*** “Check in” with yourself on a regular basis. Pause to notice background sounds, smells, sensations in your body, etc. This will help you get more in touch with your senses. If you have trouble remembering to check in, consider setting the timer on your cell-phone or use another method to remind yourself.
4. Do one thing at a time. Single-task, don’t multi-task. When filing papers, just file papers. When helping a co-worker or client, just help. When in a meeting, truly be there. Studies indicate that multi-tasking makes us feel more productive when actually we’re not. They also show that the more we multi-task, the more addicted we become to that state.
5. Do each thing deliberately and consciously, not in a rush. Before you begin, pause briefly to invest yourself in the activity.
6. Do less. Invest yourself in what’s important and let go of what’s not. Be content with what you can do well in the time you have.
7. Schedule tasks and activities farther apart. When possible, schedule “unscheduled time” into your day and try to honor it.
8. Spend at least five minutes during your workday in silence, doing nothing but being aware of your breathing. You don’t need to close your eyes or sit down. Just be where you are. When thoughts enter your mind, don’t get involved with them. Just go back to your breathing. This can be especially helpful when you’re feeling stressed.
9. Create “mindfulness triggers.” Pick a routine thing you do every day and decide that whenever you do it, you will practice mindfulness (e.g., answering the phone, opening or closing a door, drinking coffee, using the steps or elevator, washing your hands). Once you get in the habit of doing that routine thing mindfully, add a second. Build more and more mindfulness triggers into your day over time. This will help you develop mindful living.
10. Switch off as many distractions as you can, given the demands of your work, for periods of time (e.g., cell phone, personal email account).
11. Learn to recognize when you’re focusing on the past or worrying about the future, and bring yourself back to the present.
12. Pay attention when conversing with someone. Really listen.
13. When eating lunch, slow down and savor your food (you’ll eat less and digest the food better!). Practice gratitude.

14. When stressed, practice acceptance. Accept this moment, just as it is, and yourself, just as you are. This isn't the same as resignation or giving up. It means facing and acknowledging the truth of the here and now, which is necessary before you can constructively address it.
15. Be mindful of your natural dependence on and equality with those around you. Show appreciation. Value other people's opinions, showing curiosity and respect, especially when they differ from your own.
16. Be mindful of what's going well at work, especially when you're stressed. Use gratitude to neutralize your brain's natural "negativity bias." Negativity bias is our human tendency to be more influenced by things we experience as negative than those we feel are neutral or positive.
17. Change the way you think about problems. Regard them as positive challenges and recognize your body's signals that it's preparing to meet them. Studies have shown that this simple change in attitude can actually open constricted blood vessels.
18. Learn to savor every moment of your life. Invest yourself in everything you do.
19. When you get frustrated, take a deep breath, smile to yourself, and continue to practice.
20. ***Before you leave work:*** Review the day's events and consciously let them go, to help prevent work stresses from spilling into your home life. You might even create a little daily ritual to help you make the transition from work to home. (Who knows, you might even read a mindfulness poem!)

***Challenge:***  
**Focus on mindfulness at work for one month.**  
**This will help it become a habit.**

**Select bibliography:**

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*“The end of the poem is just the beginning.”*