

5 Ways To Bring Mindfulness Into Everyday Life by [Headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)

What does it mean to be mindful? Essentially, mindfulness means to be present, and in the moment. It is important that we remind ourselves of this simple fact. All too often we can lose the true essence of mindfulness by over-complicating things or putting all our emphasis on the act of meditation alone. Mindfulness is not something we leave at the chair, but something we can carry through our everyday lives. If we can apply mindfulness on the chair, then why not while brushing our teeth, catching up with an old friend, or even waiting for our morning train? All these moments present an opportunity for us to apply mindfulness, and live our lives more fully, in the present moment.

According to recent research, we spend up to 50 percent of our time caught up in our thoughts; a proven contributing factor to our unhappiness. Instead of drifting through our lives in a daze, consumed by thoughts of what could have been or planning those things which are out of our control in the first place, mindfulness allows us to engage with the here and now and approach our lives with greater clarity and peace of mind.

It is often in the more repetitive, day-to-day activities that we find ourselves switching into auto-pilot. So why not embrace these moments and see them as an opportunity to be more mindful? In this piece the mindfulness experts at Headspace provide their tips on how best to incorporate mindfulness into our daily lives. Remember not to worry about trying to clear the mind of any thoughts or feelings. Instead, try and see yourself taking a back seat; witnessing the thoughts and emotions as they come and go. If you find yourself getting distracted simply bring your attention back to the physical senses and focus your attention back on the activity itself.

1. Being Mindful in the Shower

Unmindful: Vague awareness of the sensation of water as you step into the shower. A daily battle with the temperature control trying to work out why the temperature never quite hits the spot. Within seconds your mind wanders back to that episode of American Idol last night. Was Simon Cowell wearing a wig? Is his hair naturally that glossy? I wonder where he gets those high-waisted trousers from...?

Mindful: You become aware of how good the warm water feels as it washes over your skin. Being mindful of the smell of the shower gel, and the sensation your hands passing over your skin; being mindful to set the temperature before you step in the shower; mindful of thoughts cropping up; mindful of how much water you're using; and mindful of the noise of the water coming to a halt.

2. Being Mindful whilst Brushing your Teeth

Unmindful: Brushing your teeth furiously, whilst noticing your reflection and bemoaning the appearance of that spot that seems to have cropped up from nowhere. Running around the house with the toothbrush hanging out of your mouth, trying to prepare breakfast, pack today's lunch whilst hunting out those ever elusive car keys.

Mindful: Becoming mindful of the taste and texture of the toothpaste; mindful of the sensation of your feet on the bathroom floor; mindful of the way that your arm moves to direct the brush across your teeth; mindful of each and every tooth.

3. Being Mindful on your Commute

Unmindful: You're squashed into the train or bus in a way that you didn't think was humanly possible. The resentment builds as you move through the journey and people launch themselves into the space as though the world is coming to an end and this is the only route to safety. You find yourself holding your breath because you can't bear the lethal cocktail of body odour and cheap perfume, wishing that you could magically transport yourself to that swim-up bar in the Caribbean you're gazing at in the newspaper.. "Tropicana drinks are free..."

Mindful: Being mindful of the people around you and recognising that they too might be feeling the same discomfort; mindful of the environment as a whole and your resistance to it; mindful of trying to fast forward to dreamt up situations, of escaping the present moment; mindful of the journey and how it feels - is the ride bumpy or is it comfortable and smooth?

4. Being Mindful while Washing Up

Unmindful: You approach the sink with a heavy heart and set about frantically washing the dishes, trying to get the whole thing over with in as little time as possible. You select the pieces of cutlery you know will cause the least amount of bother (the sieve and that greasy pan come last, obviously!) You find yourself day-dreaming out of the window half aware of that sharp knife lurking at the bottom of the sink. You catch sight of your cat purring smugly from the comfort of the sofa. Wouldn't it be great to be the cat...

Mindful: Becoming aware of the sensations as soon as your hands hit the warm and soapy water; mindful of how you clean the dishes, taking your time to make sure each one of them is thoroughly cleaned; mindful of what's going on around you without getting wrapped up in the storylines; mindful of the satisfaction of a job well done.

5. Being Mindful in the Queue

Unmindful: You stand twitching, full of impatience in the queue. You look at your phone and scan aimlessly through old emails and texts, searching for something, anything that might distract you from the boredom of waiting. You sigh loudly when you notice someone fumbling with their purse at the cashier desk. Can't these people be more prepared? You feel around your bag getting everything out and ready, and realise that you've left your credit card on your desk after paying for that concert ticket...

Mindful: You set off mindful and quietly prepared for what you'll need; mindful of how your mood changes when you first catch a glimpse of the queue for the bank; mindful of how you stand, your breath and where any tensions are as you scan through your body; mindful of the tendency to distract yourself from the present moment; and mindful of how you interact with the people around you.