

Your
Fitness Chick
Mindfulness Challenge

LEARN HOW TO STAY PRESENT AND FIND YOUR INNER CALM IN 6 SHORT WEEKS.

6-WEEK MINDFULNESS CHALLENGE

Getting started

Welcome to your 6-week Mindfulness Challenge! Over the coming weeks, you'll implement six different mindfulness practices. These tools are handpicked to help you build resiliency, stress less, and improve your overall well-being.

But before we get into the specifics, let's break down the basics:

What is Mindfulness?

In short: staying present. Mindfulness is being fully aware of what's happening, moment by moment. It's noticing your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surroundings in a gentle, non-judgemental way.

When most people think of mindfulness, meditation is often the first thing to come to mind. And while meditation is fabulous, there are *many* different ways to incorporate mindfulness into your day-to-day life (which you'll soon learn 🙂).

The more mindfulness you inject into your day, the greater the benefits.

Each week during this challenge, you'll commit to one mindfulness practice.

But first, take a moment to reflect on your goals for this challenge:

Benefits of Mindfulness

- Relieves stress
- Improves memory & focus
- Eases chronic pain
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces depression & anxiety
- Improves sleep
- Enhances well-being

GOALS

GOAL #1: _____

GOAL #2: _____

GOAL #3: _____

CHALLENGE #1: MINDFUL EATING

Eating with intention

What you eat is important. That's no secret. But *how* you eat is important too. In today's busy world, most people eat on autopilot. Multi-tasking and eating on the go have become the new normal. But if you eat when you're "checked out," you're more likely to make poor food choices or overeat.

Enter mindful eating. **The aim of mindful eating is to bring your full attention to your food.** And from weight loss to better digestion to improving your relationship with food -- there are *many* benefits of mindful eating.

So your challenge this week is to practice mindful eating for every meal. Here's how to do it:

STEP ONE: ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

Yep, that means no work, TV, phone, or emails while you eat. Instead, put *all* of your attention on your food. Taking 5 deep belly breaths before you eat can also help your body get into a calm "rest and digest" state.

STEP TWO: SLOW DOWN

Most people race through their meals or eat on the go. So this week, slow it down. Sit down at the table and set aside at least 15-20 minutes for each meal. If you're used to eating quickly, try setting a timer or putting your fork down between bites.

STEP THREE: CHEW YOUR FOOD

Your stomach doesn't have teeth. So do your digestion and favor and chew each bite well. Ideally, until your food is the consistency of applesauce. Thirty chews per bite is a good number to shoot for.

STEP FOUR: TUNE INTO YOUR BODY

As you chew, appreciate your food. Use your 5 senses and notice the colors, texture, and scents. Savor each bite and every little nuance of flavor. And tune into your body's signals to recognize when you feel full.

Mindful Eating Reflections

1. What did you enjoy most about mindful eating this week?

2. What about it did you find most challenging?

CHALLENGE #2: BREATHWORK

How you breathe influences how you feel. So this week's focus is to reconnect you with your breath. The goal? Do at least 10 minutes of breathwork daily.

The aim of breathwork is to practice conscious control of your breath. And it has profound benefits for your physical and mental health. Shallow breathing triggers your sympathetic nervous system, also known as your body's "fight or flight" response. Luckily, breathing deeply and slowly has the opposite effect -- turning on your parasympathetic nervous system, or "rest and digest" mode.

BENEFITS OF BREATHWORK

- Reduces stress & anxiety
- Improves sleep
- Boosts immunity
- Lowers blood pressure
- Strengthens lungs
- Improves digestion
- Helps heal from trauma
- Improves focus
- Increases energy
- Boost circulation
- Improves focus

Breathwork Techniques

DIAPHRAMATIC BREATHING

Also known as belly breathing or abdominal breathing, this technique involves slow deep breaths that move your diaphragm. Keep your hand on your belly to feel it rise and fall. For a walkthrough check out this video.

BOX BREATHING

Also called square breath, this technique involves inhaling, pausing, exhaling, and pausing again for equal amounts of time. Using a count of 4 is a good place to start. Inhales and exhales are both through the nose. This video breaks it down.

4-7-8 BREATHING

This technique involves inhaling slowly through the nose for a count of 4, holding your breath for 7 counts, and exhaling through the mouth for a count of 8. To see it in action, check out this video.

GUIDED BREATHWORK VIDEOS

- Nervous System Reset Guided Breathwork - 22 minutes
- Feel Fantastic Now: Breathwork for Energy - 14 minutes
- Alternate Nostril Breathing - 11 minutes
- Guided Breathwork Meditation - 23 minutes
- Guided Wim Hoff Method Breathing - 11 minutes

CHALLENGE #3: BEDTIME ROUTINE

Quality sleep is crucial for your health and well-being. But between busy schedules, and distractions galore (Netflix, I see you), many people are running low on sleep. Most health experts recommend at least 7-9 hours of sleep every night. Yet one-third of US adults don't get 7 hours.

So this week's mindfulness challenge is to create a bedtime routine. Having a bedtime ritual tells your brain and body it's time to sleep, helping you slide into sleep faster. And practicing good sleep hygiene improves your sleep quality, so you wake up well-rested and energized for your day.

Sleep Hygiene Tips

Be consistent
Set a regular bedtime, and stick to it. This keeps your circadian rhythm in sync.

Don't work
Staying in "work mode" too close to bedtime can make it more difficult to wind down. So don't work for 1-2 hours before bed.

Avoid screens
Electronics emit blue light that can disrupt your sleep-wake cycle. So steer clear of screens for at least an hour before bed.

Dim the lights
After sunset, turn down the lights in your house. This makes your indoor world resemble your outdoor work, triggering your body's circadian rhythm.

Create a sleep cave
The ideal sleep environment is dark, quiet, and cool.

- Turn down the thermostats a few notches before bed.
- If you're a light sleeper, use a white noise machine or turn on a fan
- Invest in blackout curtains

Wind down
Prep your mind and body for sleep by setting aside the hour before bed for relaxation. Here are some calming activities:

- Take a warm bath
- Journal
- Put on some relaxing music
- Meditate
- Do breathwork
- Read
- Do some gentle stretches

Use the space below to create your own bedtime ritual. Be specific! Set a bedtime and plan how you'll wind down for the night.

BEDTIME RITUAL

_____

_____

_____

_____

CHALLENGE #4: MINDFUL WALKS

Let's be honest... most of us spend far too much time sitting. And when we *do* walk, we're rarely truly present. So your challenge this week is to practice mindful walking for at least 20 minutes every day.

What is Mindful Walking?

Mindful Walking is basically meditation in motion. It's being aware of your body, breath, and surroundings with each step -- free of distractions (yep, that means no music, podcasts, audiobooks, or phone calls.)

Mindful walking helps you stay fully in the present, instead of ruminating about the past or worrying about the future. And there are profound benefits from this simple practice.

BENEFITS OF MINDFUL WALKING

- Reduces depression & anxiety
- Lowers blood pressure and heart rate
- Improves sleep
- Creates feeling of well-being
- Boosts mood
- Helps you manage stress
- Improves digestion
- Inspires creativity



How to Practice Mindful Walking

- Eliminate distractions. If you must bring your phone, set it on airplane mode or do not disturb.
- Before setting out, stand still for a few moments, focus on your breath, and notice how your body's feeling.
- As you walk, be aware of how you carry your body. Feel the sensations in your arms, legs, feet, chest, and head.
- Open your attention to your surroundings. Engage your 5 senses and notice all the sights, sounds, and scents around you.
- When you get distracted by thoughts, notice them and bring your attention back to your breath and body.
- Check in with yourself at the end of your walk. Do you feel calmer, energized, or more focused?

CHALLENGE #5: READING

Never Stop Learning

Learning new things is key to improving and maintaining our cognitive abilities and has been shown to improve happiness. So this week's mindfulness focus is to learn something new. Your challenge? Choose a book related to your life goals and read at least 10 pages a day.

Reading inspiring books each day floods your brain with positivity. This colors how you view situations in your life, helping you make better day-to-day choices.

Not sure which book to choose? Check out the list below for some inspiration:

TOP SELF-IMPROVEMENT BOOKS

- How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie
- The Slight Edge by Jeff Olson
- The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz
- Atomic Habits by James Clear
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey
- Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill
- The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale
- Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert
- The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho
- The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up by Marie Kondo
- Daring Greatly by Brene Brown
- The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle
- The War of Art by Steven Pressfield
- The Obstacle is the Way by Ryan Holiday



1. What book did you choose to read and why?

2. What are 3 things you learned this week from your reading?

3. Is there anything new you plan to implement into your life from what you learned?

CHALLENGE #6: AFFIRMATIONS

Wow, you've made it to week 6! You're in the home stretch. Mindfulness puts your thoughts and beliefs center stage -- so there's a good chance you've had some a-ha's. When we become more present, unhelpful thought patterns can become more obvious.

So this final week, we'll be using the power of affirmations to challenge any limiting thoughts that have popped up.

WHY AFFIRMATIONS?

Positive affirmations are statements that help you reprogram your thinking patterns and foster a more positive outlook. When used consistently, they can help you overcome limiting thoughts and beliefs.

Affirmations are shown to help ease stress, boost self-esteem, improve mindset, and help you make positive changes. And best of all -- they only take a few minutes a day!

Your challenge: Create 1-3 affirmations related to a personal goal or thought pattern you'd like to shift. Repeat these affirmations 5 times in the morning and in the evening (or more!).

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION TIPS

- **Be consistent:** The more you repeat them, the better they work.
- **Say them out loud:** Hearing things out loud can often be more powerful than just in your head.
- **Look in the mirror:** Saying affirmations while you look in the mirror helps build self-love.
- **Write them out:** Yet another way to make these positive messages stick.

EXAMPLES OF AFFIRMATIONS

- I am strong.
- I am in control of my life.
- I choose happiness.
- I trust my life.
- I am happy to be me.
- I believe in myself.
- Life is beautiful.
- I am on the right path for me
- I find the good in all things.
- I am learning and growing every day.

MY PERSONAL AFFIRMATIONS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

MINDFULNESS REFLECTIONS

Takeaways

Congrats, you did it! It's time to reflect on the past 6 weeks. How are you feeling compared to before you started this challenge? Calmer? More connected? More resilient to stress?

Whatever positive changes you're noticing, celebrate them! Jot down a few notes about any benefits you've felt from this challenge:

Now go back to your goal sheet on page two. Have you reached any of these goals? Or do you feel you're headed in that direction?

Reflect on each of the mindfulness activities you practiced. Which ones do you feel gave you the most benefits? Assign each activity a score between 1-10 (with 10 being the most benefits) and write it in the boxes below:

Mindful Eating	Breathwork	Bedtime Routine	Mindful Walks	Reading	Positive Affirmations
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Based on those scores, create a game plan for what your daily mindfulness practice will look like going forward. Jot it down below:

MY DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE