

Ten Ways to be Mindful Throughout Your Day

Developing greater awareness is about so much more than sitting with our eyes closed once or twice a day. Every single moment in the day is another opportunity to be present and aware. Consider choosing just one of these ideas to begin with and try to ensure that the new habit is really strong, then add a second one a week later.

1. As soon as you wake up in the morning, rather than jumping out of bed, pause long enough for 3 whole breaths to pass quite naturally. It will only take a few seconds, but it will set the tone for the day ahead.
2. When you brush your teeth, make it an exercise in mindfulness. Rather than just thinking about stuff, pay attention to the physical sensations, the smells, the taste etc. In time it can feel like a mini-meditation.
3. Whether you drink tea, coffee or OJ in the morning, make it a ritual. Sit down with it, if only for the first few sips. Be aware of the smell, the taste, the temperature and everything else. Savor the moment and realize when the mind has wandered.
4. Stick a post-it note on the back of your front door to remind you to be mindful as you walk after leaving. To begin with, it may only last 30 seconds or so, but with practice, it can be much longer.
5. Make the beginning and end of every journey another mindful moment. When you first get on, get in, sit down or whatever it is, be present for 3 breaths. Then repeat again, before you get up, get out or stand up. The natural beginning and end helps to jog the memory.
6. If you work at a desk, apply the same idea as travel. You don't have to do it in a very obvious way, but just using that natural change in posture to trigger the memory to be present. Every time you sit down or stand up provides a lot of opportunities in the day.
7. If you are at home more often, then try experimenting with "opening and closing". By this I mean every time you open or close a door, that becomes the trigger for mindfulness, of being aware and present. It's surprisingly effective and relatively easy to do.
8. Every time you eat, there is the opportunity to remember to be present. So always pause before eating, just long enough for one whole breath, and then as you eat, use the taste, smell etc. as your object of focus. It makes the food taste better, makes you eat slower & helps you lose weight, too!
9. Some people find that by putting a little sticker on the back of their phone, it helps to remind them to be present, when the mind is getting lost in thoughts and distractions.
10. Take a moment before going to bed to appreciate something good which has happened in the day. It may sound a bit cliché, but it feels really nice and immediately brings the mind into the present, even if we are thinking about something from the past.

