



Mindfulness & Meditation Practices for Kids AND Adults

You may have heard mindfulness and meditation described as tools for improving behavior—ways to help “challenging” kids calm down, focus, or manage big feelings.

And in the right context, these practices certainly can support all of those things. But mindfulness isn’t meant to be a behavior management tool. At their core, mindfulness and meditation are about awareness—supporting children (and the adults who practice alongside them) in noticing what they’re feeling and experiencing, so they can better understand themselves and their needs over time.



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The Purpose of Mindfulness & Meditation

What these practices ARE

- tools for noticing what’s happening in the body and mind
- ways for building regulation over time, not on demand
- flexible and responsive to individual needs
- support body awareness when feelings are hard to put into words

At School

School-based practice works best when it:

- does not single students out
- is built into the schedule
- can be done in short, regular sessions
- respects sensory and attentional differences

What these practices AREN'T

- sitting still or staying quiet
- forcing calm during stress
- compliance or behavior management strategies
- something that works the same way for every child

At Home

Routines matter more than techniques

- setting realistic intentions each morning
- after-school reset routines
- calm, shared reflection time before bed

Helpful Approaches at Home & School

Body-based grounding:

- noticing feet on the floor and the pressure beneath them
- gently pressing hands together and releasing at intervals
- tightening and releasing muscles to notice the contrast

Focused-movements:

- chair-based movement, such as slowly rotating feet or hands
- intentionally adjusting posture to release tension

Breath awareness:

- noticing the natural rhythm of the breath
- pairing breath with gentle movement (stretching, standing)
- avoiding breath counting or “deep breathing” mandates

Choice & Predictability:

- offering more than one strategy
- allowing young meditators to choose which strategies they like best
- building routines during times of calm rather than using them reactively in times of stress

Notes:

- **Co-regulation comes first.** Children learn regulation by experiencing it with others.
- Many kids (and adults) who are new to meditation assume that if their mind wanders, they’re doing something wrong. The goal in these exercises is to become aware of thoughts (and question to validity of thoughts that don’t serve us) rather than to avoid thinking altogether.





A Reassuring Note

If you're new to mindfulness or meditation, you don't need special training or the "right words" to begin. What matters most is presence and patience—not perfection.

You may choose to:

- read the scripts below aloud to a child or group
- record yourself reading them and play them back
- use them as a starting point and adapt the language to feel natural to you

There is no single "correct" way to guide a mindfulness or meditation practice.



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Mindfulness vs. Meditation: What's the difference?

Mindfulness is about *noticing*

Can happen anytime (while moving, breathing, or sitting quietly) and often forms the foundation for meditation. Mindfulness builds awareness of sensations, thoughts, emotions, and surroundings.

Meditation is a structured practice

Usually involves intentionally setting aside time to focus attention on breathing or body sensation (and often uses mindfulness as the foundation).

What You'll Find Below...

- body-based grounding, focused movement, and breath awareness are **mindfulness practices**
- the **read-aloud scripts** below are **meditation practices** that use mindfulness skills
- activities that are intentionally brief. One to three minutes is enough—especially for beginners.

Simple Read-Aloud Meditation Scripts

Take time to pause at each marker for a moment to give time for observation/focused attention

Body Awareness Meditation Script:

Let's take a moment to quietly notice what is happening with our bodies. You can close your eyes if that feels right, but you don't have to.

You don't need to change anything or do anything special—just notice.

[PAUSE for 30–60 seconds for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

Notice how your feet feel where they touch the floor. Notice how your body feels in the chair or where you're sitting.

[PAUSE for 30–60 seconds for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

If your mind wanders, that's okay. Just gently bring your attention back to how your body feels right now.

[PAUSE for 30–60 seconds for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

If you closed your eyes, you can open them again. Turn your attention back to your surroundings. Take a moment to thank yourself for taking this time for yourself.

Movement-Based Meditation Script:

We're going to move slowly and on purpose.

You can stay seated, or stand, depending on what feels most comfortable. You can also hold the wall or the back of a chair for support if you need to.

Start by slowly lifting and rotating one foot, then the other.

[Allow for 30–60 seconds of movement for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

Now place both feet firmly on the ground while you take turns rotating your hands, one at a time.

[Allow for 30–60 seconds of movement for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

Try moving different body parts in this slow controlled way. As you move, notice how your body feels.

You don't need to move in a special way—just notice the feeling of each movement.

[Allow for 30–60 seconds of movement for beginners; longer as comfort increases]

When you're ready, allow the movement to slow down and stop. Notice how your body feels when it's still.

Reminders:

- **Co-regulation comes first.** Children learn regulation by experiencing it with others. If you pre-record the scripts and allow yourself to go through the session with your child/students, you will all have the opportunity to benefit from the time together.
- **Practice and repetition build strength and confidence over time.** Honoring routines during times of calm rather than trying to use these strategies reactively in times of stress will offer the most benefit.

