

Mindfulness Worksheet - Being Still

We're addicted to movement. We get uncomfortable when our minds are asked to stand still, to do nothing, to wait, to listen, to rest.

Mindfulness and meditation help us notice how much we habitually chase distraction, and help teach us to get more comfortable with stillness.

The problem with distraction is that it takes us away from the present moment, the only place in which it's possible to experience true happiness and contentment. When we're always chasing things, happiness is always somewhere out there - away from where we are.

When we're present, quiet and still, we open ourselves to the possibility of recognizing that where we are is pretty good. It's in the stillness that we're able to see the true nature of our minds, and we're able to recognize that true nature as one of contentment and joy.

We can work with mindfulness of stillness both on and off our meditation cushions. Below is a brief exercise to calm the mind in meditation, and another to try as you go about your day.

A Meditation on Stillness

- Take a comfortable seat in the most quiet place you can find, far from distractions
- Set a timer for 3, 5 or 7 minutes
- Close your eyes and draw your attention to your breath
- Give yourself permission to rest, to do nothing, to simply be still
- Rest in the presence of breath and body awareness
- Each time you notice the 'doing' of future thinking, or the 'doing' of rumination on the past, remind yourself that you have permission to let it go, to stay present, to rest
- Feel your mind relax back into the freedom of spaciousness
- Let your mind take a break and rest in a sense of ease

A Mindfulness Task

Try the following as you go about your day...

- Do only one thing at a time, avoid multitasking
- Notice how often during your day you get the opportunity to do nothing
- Can you take advantage of these moments and do less?
- Notice when you fill space with mindless or busy-ing activity
- Notice when you fill space in your mind by thinking
- How often, outside of formal meditation, do you just sit and notice and listen?

What Did You Notice?

- Describe your general experience with the meditation
- Describe your general experience with the mindfulness activity
- Do you think you have trouble staying still?
- Are you uncomfortable with quiet?
- How attached are you to background noise?
- How often do you speak just to fill silence?
- How often do you pick up your phone, or check your email, or open a new browser tab, just for something to do?
- Why do you think it's important to rest?
- Why do you think it's important to spend time doing nothing, and being still?
- In moments of quiet, or in meditation, what do you learn about your mind?
- In meditation, were you able to reach a sense of complete relaxation? What did it feel like?

Review

Once we intentionally decide to spend more time in stillness, and less time mindlessly chasing movement, we notice that much of what we do is unnecessary.

When we occupy our body, speech and mind with unnecessary movement, we distract ourselves from what really matters. There's far more time to do the things that are really important to us. There's far more space in the world than we realize.

Once we begin to notice this space, and to allow for its presence, we will begin to notice how free and happy and content we can be, even without doing a thing.