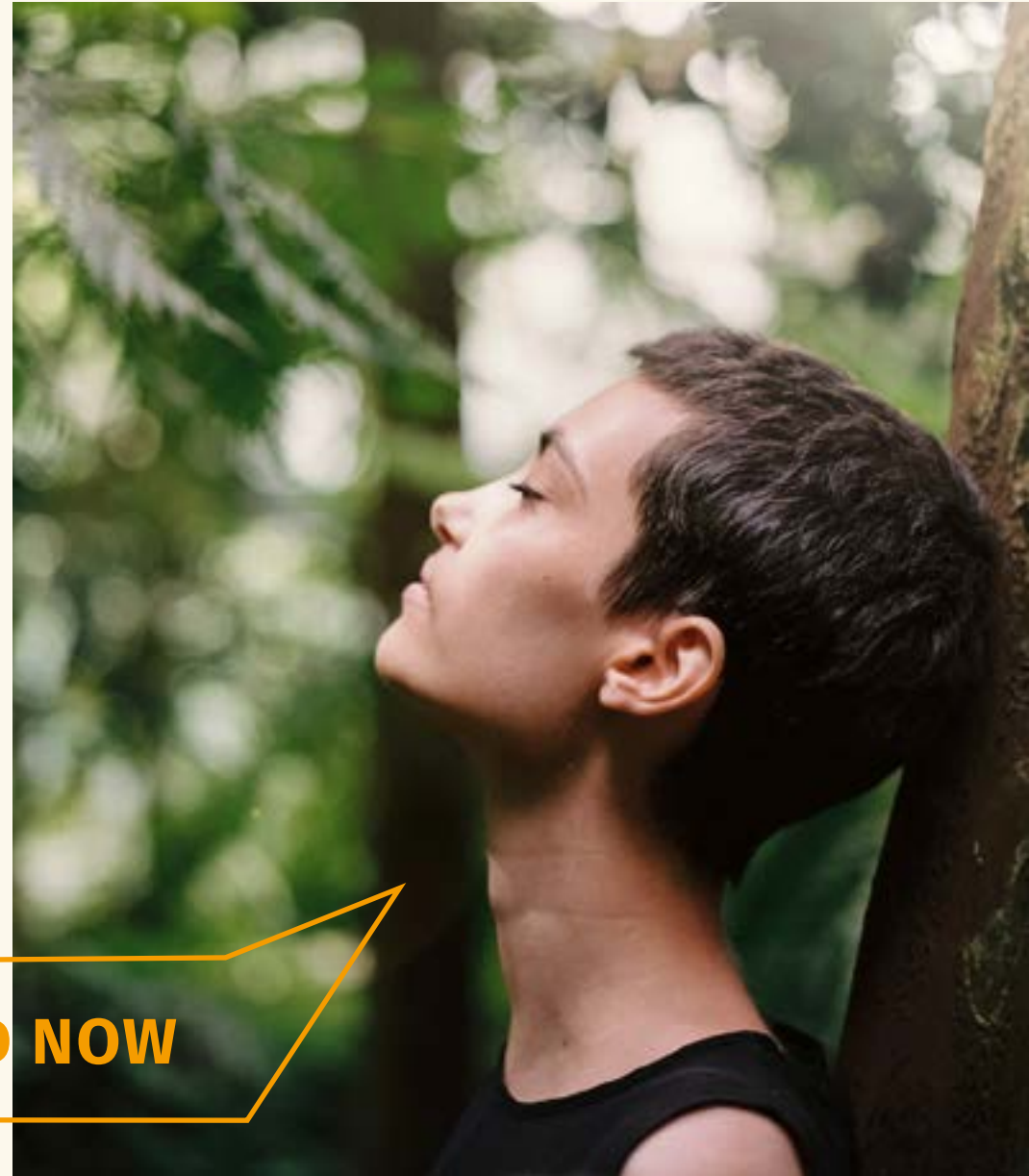


# MINDFULNESS

In our everyday life we are often far from being mindful: when we do several things **at once** or **automatically**, or when we are controlled by established habits, thought patterns and beliefs. Whenever we think we already know something, we are no longer present in the moment. We are in „**autopilot mode**“. Being mindful, on the other hand, means observing internal and external processes with undivided, calm **attention** and to perceive them as a holistic image. Mindfulness in other words, means to be present - completely in the here and now.

**TIPS TO LIVE IN THE HERE AND NOW**



## WHAT BENEFIT DOES MINDFULNESS GIVE US?

Normally we react immediately to a stimulus. For example, if you are stuck in a traffic jam, you get annoyed. But mindfulness acts as a buffer between **stimulus and reaction**. This creates a gap that helps to loosen up and change established reaction patterns. We then are no longer helplessly exposed to certain events, but can react appropriately to a situation as conscious beings. **We leave our „auto-pilot mode“ and enter an active state and self-determination.** But how? For example with this small and very effective exercise, for which you only need a few minutes of time and a raisin:

## THE RAISIN EXERCISE

This is how it works:

- › Take a **single** raisin.
- › Look at the raisin as if you have **never** seen a raisin in your life. Describe the raisin in every **detail** (colour, shape, surface).
- › Now close your eyes and feel the raisin as it lies on your hand (is it heavy or light?). Take the raisin between your thumb and forefinger and feel the **consistency** of the raisin (soft or hard, how does the surface feel?)



- › **Where** does this raisin come from?
- › Which and how many people were involved in its **creation**?
- › **Smell** the raisin. Which thoughts and feelings come up?
- › Put the raisin on your **tongue** - but please do not chew it yet - just place it on your tongue. How does the raisin **feel**? Is there already a **taste**?
- › And now **chew** exactly once and then feel. What changes?
- › Now chew the raisin at least 10-20 times and be careful. Take a break and pay attention to your **senses**. What do you taste, **where** exactly in your mouth do you taste it?
- › And now swallow the raisin - **observe** what happens next.



**HOW DOES THE  
RAISIN TASTE?**

*Sources:*

*Renate Heiderich (www.shift-thinking.de)*

*<http://www.coaching-akademie-muenchen.de/images/pdf/pdf-nl-3-2013-methode-achtsamkeit-rosinenuebung.pdf>*

## MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

In mindfulness meditation, we adopt a stable, upright and therefore „**proud**“ sitting posture. Then you close your eyes or focus on a fix point and **concentrate on your breath**. This can be done in several ways. We suggest that you concentrate on the sensation in the abdomen, which occurs when breathing in and out.

Your task now is to keep your **attention** on this feeling at all times. To make it easier to **focus** on your breath, you say „**in**“ to yourself with every inhalation and „**out**“ with every exhalation. Try to notice as quickly as possible when your attention is wandering off. If you notice that your brain is busy with something other than your breath, make a short note and return to the exercise.







When thoughts come up, say to yourself: „**Thoughts**“. When bodily sensations arise, say to yourself, „**bodily sensations**“. When feelings such as anger, impatience or restlessness arise, say to yourself, „**There is anger/impatience/restlessness**“.

If you find that you feel **pain** in your knees from sitting for long periods of time, you can try to simply perceive this feeling, make a mental note and then return to breathing. However, your brain will quickly turn back to the pain and activate avoidance schemes: You will feel an **impulse** to sit down differently. But you can also try again to simply observe („bodily sensation“, „movement impulse“, „restlessness“) and then concentrate on your breath again.

You can do this as long as you can. If it is **really unbearable**, pause briefly, thank yourself for the great effort and find another sitting position or take a short break in which you can stretch your legs.

One of the great **advantages** of this exercise is that you really train to be able to bear also unpleasant bodily sensations and feelings and not immediately react with avoidance.

**NOT IMMEDIATELY REACT  
WITH AVOIDANCE**

## **GOALS:**

- › Not to think what is not possible at the moment, but focus on what is.
- › Radical acceptance (acceptance of the situation and my feelings)
- › Non-judgemental perception of your thoughts and feelings



## SPENDING MORE TIME IN THE MOMENT INCREASES WELL-BEING AND CONCENTRATION

Mindfulness means to perceive the present attentively and to accept it without judgment.

Mindfulness means **attention**. For the present, for all that is there - without wanting to change it. But this can be difficult, especially when we do not feel well. Then (negative) thoughts can take over, we get stuck in the past or drift off into the future, **worrying** about things that might happen one day. And afterwards we **blame** ourselves for having thought about it too much again.

Thoughts and feelings come and go. It is quite natural. We only get into the **downwards spiral of thoughts** when we block ourselves against something or

judge it (too) strongly. Often it is not the actual things that trigger certain emotions in us, but rather our **thoughts** about these things. By daring to allow unpleasant things to happen without judging, worrying or distracting oneself, the level of **stress** decreases.

In principle, thinking about something a lot is not a bad thing. On the contrary: it can even trigger **feelings of happiness** - for example, when we solve a problem, make someone happy or learn something new.



**MINDFULNESS MEANS  
ATTENTION**

## MINDFULNESS CAN BE TRAINED

However, going through life more mindful requires a certain **continuity** and **practice** (there is a reason for mindfulness trainers to exist). The longer you stay involved, the more **success** will be noticeable. Mindfulness exercises help you to become the boss of your own world of thoughts, to feel your body, senses, needs and feelings, to let stress pass, ...

The following mindfulness exercises are well suited for **beginners** and do not take up much time.





## 5 ADDITIONAL MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

### 1 START YOUR DAY RIGHT WITH MEDITATION

You can already start the day with a good portion of mindfulness. Simply take a few minutes for this, preferably immediately after waking up and lie down with open eyes.

Now you:

- › Consciously breathe in and out deeply several times.
- › Close your eyes and focus on your body and your mood, listen carefully: The best way to do this is to scan your body once, from head to toe, and perceive how you feel, what thoughts and ideas are circulating.

- › The emphasis is on perceiving things: This short meditation and mindfulness exercise is about training not to get stuck on a feeling or thought, but to let unpleasant things go without getting angry about them. This is achieved by realizing that you „get stuck“ and then shifting your attention to the next part of your body or simply focus on breathing. Maybe it helps to let go by saying to yourself, „Oh, okay, this is a thought that is on my mind.“



## 2 APPRECIATE THE ORDINARY THINGS IN LIFE

Mindfulness exercises can **always** be practiced - whether while brushing your teeth, having breakfast, or on your way to work or waiting for the bus. What does the toothbrush in the mouth feel like? What kind of sounds does it make? Is the toothpaste cold or warm?

**Concentrating** fully on just one thing - the opposite of multitasking - is the key to more attentiveness. Our brain shuts off all the hustle and bustle around us and focuses. That feels good!

- › Especially when **eating**, it's a great experience: far too often we eat fast and without

enjoying. Why don't you try to eat very slowly and describe exactly what you taste, feel and perceive.

- › Walking to work or going for a stroll: How does walking **feel** under my feet? How many steps do I take per breath? What do my arms do when I walk? Alternatively, you can **actively** concentrate on your surroundings and look for beautiful or strange things. You will certainly discover tiny details that you have never noticed before. Here, too, rule number one is: **feel, smell, listen**.

**TIP:** During this mindfulness exercise it can help you to make „inner notes“ by formulating what you are just discovering - or imagine that your head is a camera and your eyes are taking pictures of your favourite impressions.



## 3 STONE MEDITATION

Stone meditation sounds like some sort of hocus-pocus? This exercise is not as weird as it sounds. The next time you go for a walk, just pick up a **stone** that you would have kicked away with your feet or that you normally would have walked past. Find a quiet and comfortable place at home and examine the stone with all your **senses**. What colour is the stone? What does its surface look like and how does it feel? What does the stone smell like? What kind of sounds can it make? It is best to close your eyes, as this sharpens your other senses. Where does it come from? What has it already experienced? And off we go on a **fantastic journey** ...

# 4 BREATHE!

A popular tool in mindfulness exercises is your own breath. After all, it is **always** there and flows through us.

During a breathing exercise, one pays close attention to the **course** of their breath throughout the body. You feel the draft through your nostrils, the expansion of your chest and the convexity of your abdomen. It is not important to breathe particularly deeply. Your breath should remain exactly as it **naturally** is. Simply observe it, do not change it. You should take at least five minutes for this mindfulness exercise. If you like, you can of course continue for longer. An alarm clock helps you to let go, so you don't have to blink all the time.







## 5 KEEP A DIARY

A diary help you **record** the moments when you were completely in the here and now, e.g. when you took a bath, went for a walk or made a phone call. Whether in form of notes or as a written text – the more often these thoughts are written down, the more you train your **attention** and **consciousness**.

By the way: keeping a diary is also a great sleep ritual, it promotes the formation of positive thoughts.



**MORNING RITUALS CAN ALSO WORK MIRACLES. FOR EXAMPLE YOU CAN START THE DAY OFF BY:**

- › stretching out long and wide
- › opening the window and breathe in and out deeply
- › a short meditation
- › putting on your favourite music
- › haveing a glass of water
- › play a round of ...

**Really anything that makes you feel good in the morning is allowed.**

Source: <https://www-de.scoyo.com>



# MORE TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CORONA EVERYDAY LIFE



Tips for staying at home with children (PDF)



Managing university tasks in a structured way (PDF)



Tips for organising your daily routine (PDF)



Weekly schedule (PDF)



List of pleasant activities to do at home (PDF)



Video about the Pomodoro technique (YouTube)



Initial help on dealing with (negative) feelings (PDF)



Annual Calendar



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Website of the Psychosocial Counselling

anonymous if desired

consultation in  
English possible