

PSYCHOLOGY MONTH 2016

1-MINUTE MINDFULNESS EXERCISES FOR EVERYDAY STRESS

One major component of mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with no internal judgment. Research evidence suggests mindfulness has many positive effects in many areas of daily functioning, particularly with reducing stress. There is growing interest in mindfulness practice for students during their school day.

This week's Psychology Month article provides an introduction to mindfulness with some very brief "trial" mindfulness exercises that may be helpful in dealing with stress. Try one or two of these activities to see if they are helpful and of interest.

BEGIN BY TURNING OFF YOUR PHONE AND/OR COMPUTER

1. Two mindful bites

- Try mindful eating for the first two bites of any meal or snack
- For the first two bites of any meal or snack you eat, pay attention to the sensory experiences - the texture, taste, smell, appearance, and the sounds when you bite into your food.
- You're just paying attention to your sensory experience in an experiential rather than evaluative way

2. What one breath feels like

- Instead of formal meditation, try paying attention to what one breath feels like.
- Feel the sensations of one breath flowing into and out from your body
- Notice the sensations in your nostrils, your shoulders, your rib cage, your abdomen, etc.

3. Give your **brain** a break

- Take a mindful moment to give your brain a break rather than filling up every tiny space in your day by automatically reaching to check your phone or email.
- Instead, spend a few seconds noticing your environment.
- A common example is watching out the window, e.g., watch the leaves or branches of a tree fluttering in the breeze

5. Scan your body

- Scan your body from top to toe for any sensations of discomfort or tension
- Attempt to soften to the sensations of discomfort
- Next, scan your body for any sensations of comfort or ease

6. Do one action mindfully.

- Pick an action you do at the same time every day and plan to do that action mindfully
- For example, the moment you turn on the tap to wash your hands, notice the temperature of the water, feel the water sliding over your fingers, and watch the droplets splashing against the sink.

For further information, please speak to your school psychology staff or contact the Chief Psychologist, Dr. Debra Lean, at debra.lean@dpcdsb.org

(Adapted from: Boyes, A. *Psychology Today*, February 12, 2013)