



COVID-19: Practice Mindfulness This Holiday Season

The COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing means we may be unable to share holiday celebrations with loved ones and friends in the usual way. This can add to the stress of the season and dampen our good cheer. Using the basic principles of mindfulness—which is about staying grounded, aware and focused on the moment, no matter what the situation—can keep you from feeling overwhelmed, helping you reconnect with the joys that can be found. Sitting and meditating or focusing on slow, deep breathing are just two notable ways to help you achieve mindfulness. Try these other simple ways to be mindful.

Tune in to what matters. Mindfulness can help you gain more insight about how you want to live your life even in tough times. Focus on what part of the holiday season gives you meaning or lifts you up. It could be the simple act of giving and receiving greetings, for example.

Focus on doing one thing at a time to feel more balanced. Bring your full attention to whatever you are doing, whether stringing lights or sitting in a year-end virtual meeting.

Take a few minutes to walk outside. A walk in the fresh air, feeling your feet firmly strike the ground can bring you back to the calmness of the moment, silencing anxious thoughts.

Regard worrisome or negative thoughts as passing clouds. Don't judge them. Let them arise and float by like drifting clouds.

Tap into the small moments of joy. It may not come from hosting the perfect holiday spread, for example. Just seeing the winter moon shining through the trees or your dog romping through the first snowfall can bring heartfelt delight.

Learn to say, “Hmmm, that’s interesting.” With more time spent indoors with family, tensions and differences can surface. Instead of reacting and letting anxiety or anger take over, learn to just observe what you're feeling, and greet your emotions with kindness. This will help you reconnect more with yourself, and by so doing, may help you experience more effective connectedness with others.

Want more guidance about mindfulness? There are many meditation apps, audiobooks, and programs available. Start by checking the resources on [mindful.org/audio-resources-for-mindfulness-meditation/](https://www.mindful.org/audio-resources-for-mindfulness-meditation/)



If you find that you can't shake stress or anxiety, talk to your health practitioner for help or seek help from a Licensed Professional Counselor.



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