



Be present

Mindfulness at work

Aetna Resources For LivingSM

Do you ever seem to float through the workday without focusing on your tasks? Do you always feel stressed? Mindfulness can help you stress less and get more done.

The tool of mindfulness¹

It's important to stay "present" in the workplace. What does it mean to be present? It's simple. Live in the moment — not the past or the future.

But being present in the workplace is easier said than done. One way is to practice a technique known as mindfulness.

The concept of mindfulness was defined by a Buddhist practitioner named Jon Kabat-Zinn. He stated that mindfulness is "paying focused attention, on purpose, without judgment, to the experience of the present moment."

Mindfulness in the workplace

Do you try to be a multitasking master? Sometimes we try to do too many things at one time. In fact, research shows that multitasking makes us less productive.² Mindfulness helps you focus on one thing at a time.

At work, we sometimes focus on past regrets or make assumptions about the future. Being present will help you feel less stressed at work and more focused on your daily tasks. Being mindful at work can help you:

- Focus more
- Stress less
- Get more done
- Be more open to feedback

¹10 Ways to Bring More Mindfulness to Your Work Day. The Intentional Workplace. Accessed Sept 2017.

²Gorlick, Adam. Media multitaskers pay mental price, Stanford study shows. Stanford News. Accessed Sept 2017.



Where to start

As with any new skill, you'll get better with time and practice. Start with these tips:

- **Practice mono-tasking.** Instead of doing several things at once, choose a task to do alone. Give that project your full attention.
- **Focus on your breathing.** Our lives can get busy. Throughout your day, take a few deep breaths. Notice how your body responds as you breathe in and out.
- **Check in with yourself.** Feeling stressed at work? Take a moment to do a mindful check-in. Pay attention to how your body feels. What emotions are you aware of? And notice what's around you. What do you hear, taste, feel or smell?
- **Listen — really listen.** We're often doing other things while someone speaks to us. Take the time to truly listen. Pay attention to the other person's emotions through body language and tone.
- **Support others.** In addition to lending an ear to your coworkers, recognize any accomplishments they've made.
- **Picture your goals and reflect.** Do you know what you're trying to accomplish when you go into a meeting or when you call someone? Having an outcome in mind will help you focus on the task and reach your goal. Then, at the end of the day, reflect on how you performed at work. Were you truly present?

Good for your mind and body

After practicing mindfulness at your workplace, you may notice you're more productive and less stressed. And the benefits don't end there. Mindfulness has been shown to help people with:

- Depression symptoms
- Sleep problems
- Pain management
- Anxiety and phobias
- Recovery from surgery
- Overall stress
- Relationship issues

Staying mindful is good for you — at work or at home. Take some time to live in the moment and create more focus on the projects in front of you. Your mind, body and employer will thank you.

Are you living in the moment?
Make mindfulness a priority at
your workplace today.

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