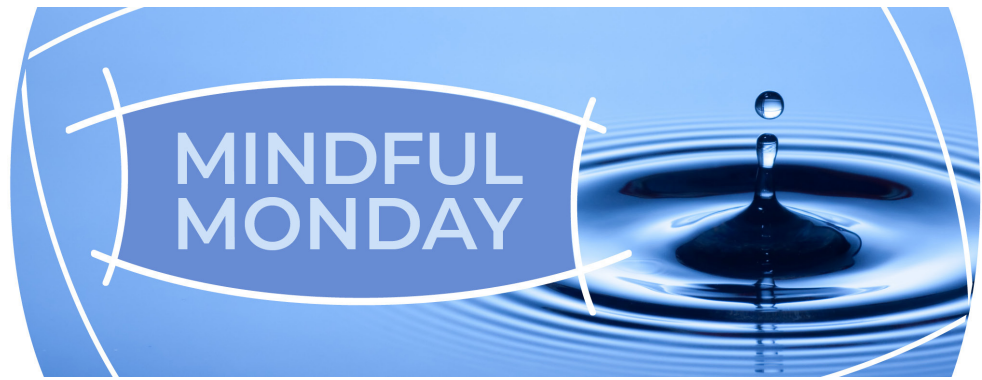


3



simple strategies to help you focus and de-stress

Does it seem like you can't complete even the simplest task without being distracted? Texts, emails, social media alerts, noisy colleagues, ringing phones.... Friends, you are not alone.

Distracted thinking — aka daydreaming or mind wandering — affects everyone. In fact, researchers have found that people think about something other than what they're actually doing — or supposed to be doing — almost half of the time. Turns out that a wandering, easily distracted mind is actually the default mode for the human brain.

Succumbing to distraction over and over, though, can build stress, foster unhappiness and even lead to depression. So if you're one of the many looking to figure out how to handle distractions

and improve your ability to focus, take comfort in the fact that research has shown a way forward.

One word: mindfulness.

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-to-moment awareness of where you are and what you're doing. At work, for instance, it means you're focused on the project in front of you; walking with a friend, it gives you the ability to really focus on your surroundings and your conversation. Scientists have shown that you can actually train your brain to become more mindful. Like anything else, it just takes practice.

Ready to get started? These three practices have all proven useful in building mindfulness.

Do daily distractions leave you feeling unfocused and stressed? Take a breath. Here are three great ways to start taking back control.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

MBSR training has become a recognized way to help

1 people learn to avoid distractions and increase their attention on the task in front of them. It can also help improve memory, motivation and autonomy — all things likely to make you (and your boss) happier. MBSR programs typically include breathing, stretching and awareness exercises.



Mindful Movement

3 The hallmarks of mindful movement, or yoga — structured breathing, controlled movement, mental focus — make it sound like the perfect antidote to stress and distracted thinking, but does science back that up? Yes, over and over again. Many studies have found that, after beginning a yoga program, people feel less stressed, more focused, even more optimistic. In fact, yoga's been found to be even more beneficial to people who're highly stressed.

In today's so-called attention economy, the world is actually being designed to distract you. Everybody wants your attention, and they want it right now. But you can take back control of your focus, shed that stress, and wake up happier to meet your day.

Meditation



2 Meditation aims to increase your awareness of the present moment and help you develop a gentle, accepting attitude toward yourself. Regular meditation practice has been shown to actually alter the brain — in a good way. One study showed that the area of the brain dedicated to regulating your emotions was significantly larger in meditators. In other words, in a world determined to trip you up with distractions and unpleasant surprises, meditation can help you stay more positive and more focused.

**Ready to
commit to
becoming
more mindful?**

**Great!
Go for it!**