

Making Everything Easier!™

Mindfulness Workbook

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

- Review and develop your mindfulness practice*
- Experiment with different mindfulness techniques*
- Find ways to make time for mindfulness*
-  *Follow the guided meditations with downloadable online audio for an enhanced mindfulness experience*

Shamash Alidina
Joelle Jane Marshall



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by Shamash Alidina and Joelle Jane Marshall
Foreword by Dr Shanida Nataraja



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Foreword

In a world filled with constant distractions, demands and stresses, an increasing number of people are earnestly searching for a way of life that brings focus, clarity, calm and, ultimately, fulfilment and happiness. Whilst there are numerous doctrines or disciplines that offer this way of life, mindfulness is a discipline that I am particularly drawn to as a neuroscientist, as it is supported by a rich and convincing scientific evidence base. Thanks to the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and other researchers, we know that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can boost well-being, reduce symptoms of stress and improve mood and coping strategies in a wide range of patients, including those suffering from chronic pain, those fighting cancer or those managing stress-related diseases. Through the research of John Teasdale and colleagues, we know that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is an effective treatment for depression and anxiety in patients who are failing to respond to traditional treatments. And through the efforts of countless researchers, we know that mindfulness-based practices can boost work productivity, reduce work absenteeism and improve social interactions in the workplace. This compelling evidence suggests a clear role for mindfulness in maintaining health, as well as addressing ill health, in people of all ages, backgrounds and professions.

Over the last decade, science has also revealed what happens in the brain during the practice of mindfulness, and this exciting research suggests that mindfulness may have effects on the performance of our brains, as well as beneficial effects on our physical and mental well-being. On both the short- and long-term, mindfulness can elicit

changes in our brain that improve our emotional resilience, enhance our ability to regulate our emotional states, fine-tune our concentration and problem-solving skills, and develop compassion and empathy, for ourselves and others. These changes allow us to realise more of the potential of our brains, better equipping ourselves to deal with the challenges of modern life. This evidence presents a strong rationale for incorporating regular mindfulness practice into our everyday lives: in our families; in our schools; in the workplace; as part of our healthcare systems; and in our prisons.

The *Mindfulness Workbook For Dummies* is an excellent introduction to mindfulness and the nuts and bolts of how to live a mindful life. Embarking on any journey can be daunting and the mindful journey is no different. Where should you start? What books should you read? Who is a good teacher? And what is mindfulness anyway? This book sheds light on what being mindful really means and uses practical exercises to escort the reader through the different stages of the mindful journey. Whether a short body scan exercise to raise awareness of bodily sensations or a breathing meditation to calm the mind in a stressful situation, Shamash Alidina and Joelle Jane Marshall provide readers with a series of tools to help them both understand mindfulness and incorporate it into their everyday lives. The *Mindfulness Workbook For Dummies* can be used both in conjunction with an eight-week mindfulness-based programme taught by an experienced teacher and as an aid to guide the reader through this programme in their own home through solitary practice. By providing helpful tips and tricks, addressing potential difficulties arising through mindfulness practice, and giving readers step-by-step instructions on how to do the various mindfulness exercises, Shamash and Joelle have created

an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to embark on their own mindful journey.

Dr Shanida Nataraja

Neuroscientist and author of *The Blissful Brain: Neuroscience and Proof of the Power of Meditation* (Gaia Books).

Introduction

Welcome to the *Mindfulness Workbook For Dummies*. Mindfulness offers both a set of techniques and a way of living that can lead towards greater peace, wisdom and joy. Mindfulness is an ancient approach, but now scientific evidence from top universities worldwide shows its effectiveness in treating a range of conditions like depression, anxiety, chronic pain and much more.

Life is full of many challenges – everyone goes through some sort of difficulty over the course of their time on earth. Some difficulties may be physical or practical; others mental or emotional. Mindfulness offers a way of coping with all these difficulties in a harmonious way, so that you don't make those difficulties even more painful, but meet them with wisdom and dignity, allowing them space to dissolve in their own time.

Mindfulness also enhances your life when things are going well. You learn to notice the world around you, become more grateful for what you have, more kind and forgiving towards yourself and others, focus more effectively at work, home, and in your relationships and enhance your physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

We've written this book to make mindfulness a practical reality in your life. The written exercises and accompanying guided meditation audio tracks offer a way to practise and then reflect on your personal experience of mindfulness and deepen your insights, both for beginners and more experienced practitioners too.

About This Book

This book contains a range of different ways to practise mindfulness in your life. We give you a combination of some theory along with lots of exercises to try out. With mindfulness, you discover much more by trying out the exercises rather than just reading theory, so this workbook is an ideal format for exploring mindfulness.

You can use this book as a stand-alone way of developing your own mindfulness. We describe all the key methods of practising mindfulness, and together with the accompanying audio, you can take your first steps into a more mindful way of living.

You can also use this book with a mindfulness teacher or therapist to discover new insights, try new exercises and to keep a useful record of your progress. You can then look back at what you wrote in this book to see how things have changed for you in the weeks, months or years that you've been engaging in mindfulness.

This book contains the main ways in which you can use mindfulness to overcome common difficulties like stress, anxiety, depression and physical health conditions. But the exercises are helpful for everyone; improving creativity, focus and offering a fresh, new look at your own life.

How to Use This Book

You don't need to read this book from beginning to end. You can dip in and out of different chapters, choosing what's most relevant or interesting for you. We've done our best to cross-reference each chapter to other parts in the book, so you can delve deeper into any concepts or exercises that may be of help to you. Use the Table of

Contents at the front of the book and Index at the back to locate specific information.

Please feel free to write in this book - that's how it's designed. Scribble in each table to your heart's content. And if you need more space, you may like to copy the tables for your own use or use your own notebook for further reflection.

Foolish Assumptions

If you're reading this book, we're assuming you're interested in learning mindfulness. We're guessing that you've heard about mindfulness and want to know more. As this is a workbook, we also assume, perhaps foolishly, that you want to get practical and do some mindfulness exercises and keep a record of your experience.

Perhaps you're a mindfulness teacher, coach or therapist looking for exercises to use with your students or clients. You may have a friend or relative suffering from a difficulty and want to know if mindfulness can help. Or you may already be an experienced mindfulness practitioner looking to deepen your awareness. Whatever the reason, we hope you find the book useful.

How This Book Is Organised

The *Mindfulness Workbook For Dummies* is divided into five parts:

Part I: Getting Started with Mindfulness

This part unlocks the treasure chest and gives you a basic overview of mindfulness. [Chapter 1](#) is all about what mindfulness is and how mindfulness may unfold in your life. In [Chapter 2](#) we explain all the benefits of practising mindfulness on a regular basis.

Part II: Preparing Yourself for Mindful Living

Part II is about ensuring that you have the best underlying approach and mind-set before you dive into practical mindfulness exercises.

[Chapter 3](#) is all about engaging the right attitudes, so when you do the mindfulness practice, you have a good grounding. Without the right attitudes, you may easily get side-tracked or disheartened if your experience doesn't match your expectations. This chapter helps you to set things straight. [Chapter 4](#) covers two modes of mind - 'doing' and 'being' mode. You explore the nature and importance of each of these modes, and how you can use mindfulness to identify and switch modes when necessary.

Part III: Practising Mindfulness

In this part we get down to detailed mindfulness practice. In [Chapter 5](#) you learn all the core mindfulness meditations that you can continue to use for the rest of your life, if you like! [Chapter 6](#) is all about how to integrate mindfulness into your everyday life. In this way, you don't just meditate, but live mindfulness, moment by moment. Chapters [7](#) and [8](#) offer you a detailed, evidence-based eight-week mindfulness programme that has been tested by tens of thousands of students for many years. You can use this to learn mindfulness in a methodical way - ideal for beginners to mindfulness. [Chapter 9](#) helps to answer common questions that people have

when first learning mindfulness. If you're having any difficulties in your mindfulness practice, [Chapter 9](#) is the place to go.

Part IV: Enjoying the Rewards of Mindfulness

In this part, you discover how to use mindfulness to both increase your wellbeing and deal with common challenges. [Chapter 10](#) is about happiness, and how mindfulness can help to enhance your long-term wellbeing. In [Chapter 11](#) we offer ways mindfulness can relieve your stress and anger, and boost your energy. [Chapter 12](#) explains the causes of anxiety and depression, and how mindfulness can help in these areas. Your physical health is covered in [Chapter 13](#), along with how you can use mindfulness for conditions like chronic pain. And finally, [Chapter 14](#) is about using mindfulness to improve your skills as a parent or teacher, and we share a range of specific mindful exercises to use with children.

Part V: The Part of Tens

Here in Chapters [15](#) and [16](#) you can pick up tips for living mindfully and ways to get yourself motivated to meditate. Online (at www.dummies.com/extras/mindfulnessworkbook.uk), we give you an additional Part of Tens chapter with lots of resources and ways of creatively enhancing your mindfulness. Some people like to start by reading the Part of Tens - we encourage you to take a look at these mini chapters for instant inspiration.

Icons Used in This Book

We use icons throughout this workbook to bring different types of information to your attention and to clearly guide you through the book.



This icon is used to emphasise information worth bearing in mind.



The Tip icon alerts you to additional useful information that may help you to better understand a concept or to complete an exercise.



You'll see this icon next to exercises to encourage you to flex your mindfulness muscles.



This icon is an alarm denoting possible pitfalls, common errors or potential dangers.



Find pearls of wisdom and stories to get you thinking with this icon.

Where to Go from Here

This book offers a practical hands-on approach to mindfulness. Being a workbook, we devote more space to exercises and less to the underlying theory of mindfulness. If you'd like a more detailed description of the mindfulness exercises and to experience a different set of guided audio meditations, you may also like *Mindfulness For Dummies* by Shamash Alidina (Wiley). If

you're looking for a variety of techniques to help you relieve stress, check out *Relaxation For Dummies* by Shamash Alidina (Wiley). For more suggestions of a range of books, audio, films, websites, retreats and more, go to www.dummies.com/extras/mindfulnessworkbookuk for an extra Part of Tens chapter: '(Nearly) Ten Ways to Expand Your Mindfulness Experience'. Head to www.dummies.com/go/mindfulnessuk to find the accompanying audio meditations mentioned in the book:

- ✓ **Track One:** Introduction (2 minutes)
- ✓ **Track Two:** Body scan meditation, [Chapter 5](#) (25 minutes)
- ✓ **Track Three:** Sitting meditation (expanding awareness), Chapters [5](#) and [7](#) (20 minutes)
- ✓ **Track Four:** Mountain meditation, [Chapter 9](#) (10 minutes)
- ✓ **Track Five:** Lake meditation, [Chapter 3](#) (10 minutes)
- ✓ **Track Six:** Three-minute breathing space meditation, [Chapter 6](#) (3 minutes)

Part I



Go to www.dummies.com/go/mindfulnessworkbookuk to listen to audio meditations.

In this part . . .

- ✓ Explore the origins and benefits of mindfulness.
- ✓ Understand different types of meditation.
- ✓ Consider your goals and expectations for your mindfulness journey.
- ✓ Enjoy the many benefits of mindfulness, from the positive effect on your body to improving your concentration.
- ✓ Go to www.dummies.com/go/mindfulnessworkbookuk to listen to audio meditations.