

Mindfulness Exercises:

Breathwork– In this exercise, you are attempting to deepen your breathing since most of us breath many shallow breaths throughout the day. Begin by sitting in a comfortable position with both feet flat on the floor. Take in a slow, continuous breath while counting to four. Then hold your breath to the count of four. Now exhale a long, continuous breath to the count of four. Repeat this as many times as you can until you achieve a more relaxed state.

Relaxing to the count of five – In this exercise, sit comfortably with feet on the floor. Take several deep breaths to relax and strengthen a sense of the present. Choose a spot in front of you to focus on throughout the remainder of this exercise. Begin with identifying five things in your peripheral vision while keeping your eyes on the same spot. Next, with eyes still on the spot, identify five things you hear. This may take a few more seconds and does help deepen your focus and present focus. Next, identify five things that you feel. This can be kinesthetic feelings, such as “the chair is cool” or emotional feelings. Repeat this same sequence using the number four, then three, two and one. If still stressed when you get to one, then start again at five and work your way to one again. You may have to repeat several times at first, but then your brain will know to relax after doing it many times.

Longer Nature Meditation – This meditation can actually last as long as you would like it to, but you will need to work up to longer time frames as in any meditation. Begin by deciding on a place in nature that you have been to and simply loved or have already felt tremendous relaxation while there. Sit in a comfortable position with feet on the floor and do several deep breaths. Then close your eyes and picture this place in nature. Continue long and slow breaths for several times until you have developed a longer and more rhythmic breathing. With your eyes closed, imagine this place with each of your five senses. Imagine what you hear, but stay with it for several minutes. Imagine what you feel on your skin or face, stay with this for several minutes. Imagine what you see, and once again, stay with this or these images for several minutes. Imagine yourself tasting something in this place, whether food, water, something in the breeze, etc. Let this also last several minutes. Continue breathing and traveling to each of the five different senses. Continue the longer, slower breathing as you pick each new sense. When done, open your eyes and take several more deep breaths before moving.