



Finding a balance.

Body and mind are often treated as separate branches of wellbeing, but the two are closely interconnected. Find out more about how tools like mindfulness can help you achieve a balance between your emotional and physical health.



Balancing mind and body

Mind and body balance is key to leading a healthy life. When our mental and physical wellbeing are in tune, we give ourselves the best chance of dealing with stress. We're also more likely to behave with resilience – the ability to adapt to life's challenges – if we're looking after ourselves.

Making better choices

Competing demands for our time and attention put us at risk of stress and anxiety. When we feel stressed or worried, it's easy to slip into unhealthy habits. We may make poor food choices, and our sleeping can be affected too. It can be tempting to overdo caffeine or alcohol in a bid to make ourselves feel better.

Using alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes or anything else to relieve stress is only a temporary fix. In the long term, the best strategy is one which addresses the root of the problem.

Embrace mindfulness

Mindfulness is a popular practice in modern wellbeing. Based on the central idea of becoming aware of your surroundings and living in the present, it offers a path to dealing with worry and stress in our lives.

Noticing what's going on with our feelings and our response to the world boosts connection between mind and body. If we view our lives through a mindfulness lens, we're more likely to observe patterns of thinking and behaviour and be able to see ourselves differently.

Professor Mark Williams, previously Director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, suggests that if we recognise thoughts as mental events, we are able to spot the signs of stress and worry earlier.

Mindfulness tips

Notice what's around you

Being aware of how you interact with your surroundings is one of mindfulness's principles. How does the ground feel under your feet? What sounds can you hear where you are now? Connecting sensations with emotions can help you gain welcome new perspectives.

Practise gratitude

Feeling grateful for what you have is a type of positive thinking. If your mind gets into a negative thought loop, focus on what's good about your life and what you're

grateful for. Some people find keeping a gratitude journal a useful mindfulness tool.

Let go of things

Mindfulness teaches the importance of living in the present and being aware of your thoughts, feelings and sensations. Part of living in the present involves letting go of regrets about the past or anxieties about the future. Try to forgive yourself (or someone else) for past mistakes and focus on things you can control.

Try meditation or yoga

Meditation and yoga both help to relax your body and clear your mind of negative or repetitive thoughts. Guided meditations are a good way of learning how to meditate and it's easy to find resources online. Yoga promotes strength in body and mind and there's a practice to suit everyone.

More about mindfulness

If you want to explore mindfulness as a practice, there are plenty of resources out there to help you.

- Try an app like Headspace. Headspace is a specialist mindfulness programme. Using an app is a great way of introducing mindfulness into your day.
- The NHS has helpful online guides to mindfulness and positive mental health as well as an apps library. Search for 'NHS mindfulness.'
- Charities like Mind and the Mental Health Foundation offer resources to help with mindfulness practice.

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It's easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living 'in our heads.'

Professor Mark Williams