

Mindfulness

Finding Peace in the Present Moment

- 87+ years, started by Railway Mail Carriers
- 2+ million members worldwide
- One of the largest carriers in the FEHB
- Exclusively Federal / Postal / Annuitants
- Extensive nationwide network of doctors, dentists, hospitals and other providers
- Your friend in federal

Webinar tips

- You will find a PDF of the slides in the Resources list
- Closed captioning will be available during the webinar
- The webinar audio will be played through your computer — no need to mute your device
- Technical issues:
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Agenda

- What is mindfulness?
- Why is mindfulness needed?
- Mindfulness-wellness connection
- Science behind mindfulness
- Strategies to become more mindful
- Resources and tools



mind-ful-ness

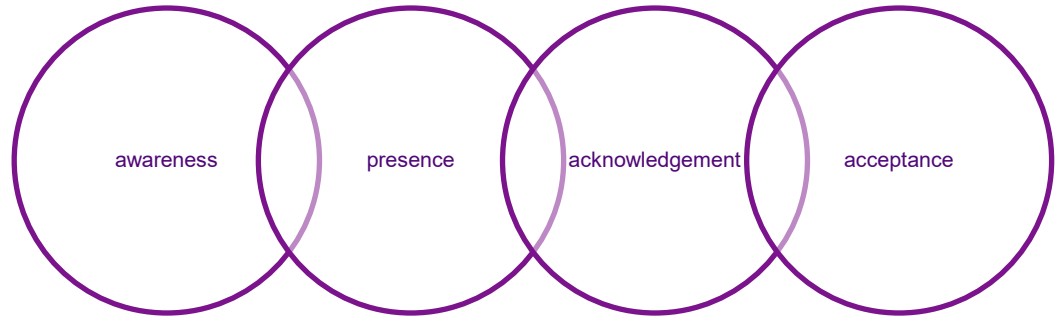
/'mīn(d)f(ə)lnəs/

noun



What is mindfulness?

1. The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something
2. A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.



Source: Oxford Languages Dictionary

What do you think about mindfulness?

- a) A way to find peace and calm
- b) I don't have time to be mindful
- c) Being more present in the moment
- d) It sounds scary to be with my thoughts and feelings
- e) It's only for yoga and meditation





Why is mindfulness needed?

- Fast-paced society
- Smartphones and social media distractions
- Information overload
- Mind-LESS scrolling or binge-watching shows
 - Leads to anxiety, stress, depression, trouble focusing, etc.
 - All pull us AWAY from the present moment

Source: [National Sleep Foundation](#)

The mindfulness-wellness connection



Manage stress
Reduced depression, anxiety
Improve attention
Better sleep



Greater satisfaction with life
Increased capacity to handle adversity
Better connection with others



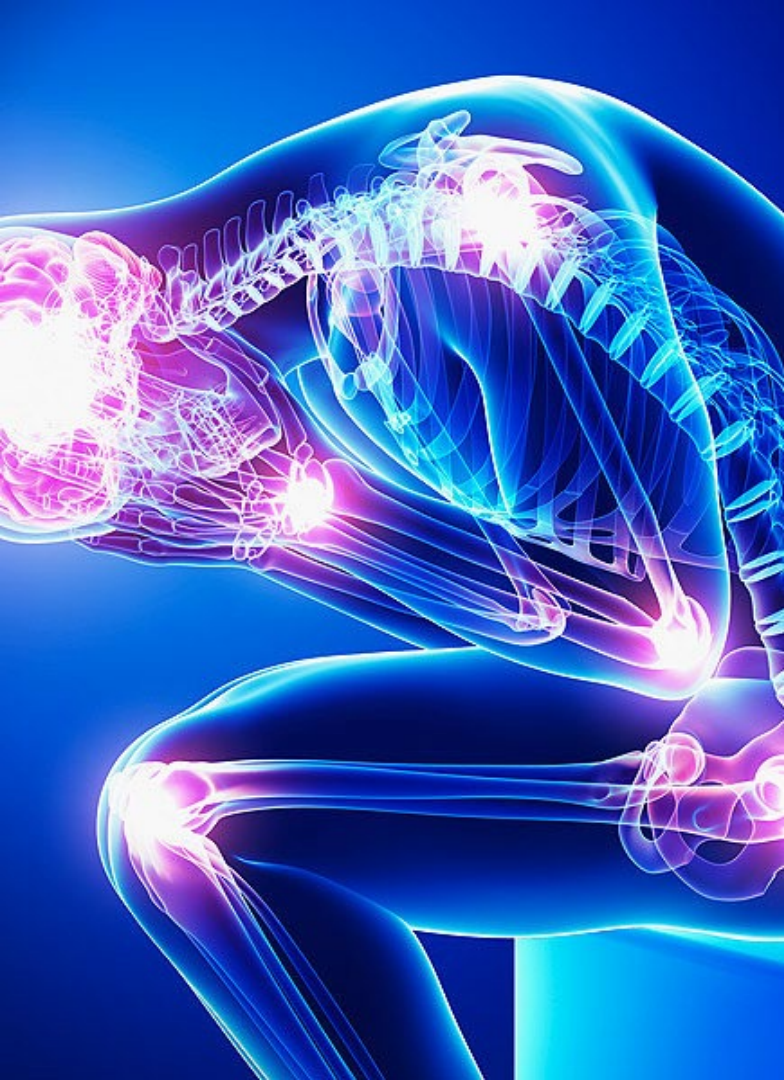
Reduce pain
Lower blood pressure
Improve diabetes control
Gastrointestinal health





What's the science behind mindfulness?

- Brain activation
- Neuroplasticity
- Enter parasympathetic state (mindfulness-based stress reduction)
 - Improved immune function
 - Improved mental clarity
 - Improved attention



Effects of mindfulness for chronic pain

- Calms the nervous system
- Improves processing of pain
- Changes relationship to pain
- Safer alternative or addition to prescription pain medications

Source: [The Science of Mindfulness](#)



How can we practice mindfulness?

- Meditation
- Mindful eating
- Walking meditation
- Make a gratitude list
- Journal
- Find joy in simple pleasures
- Guided meditations
- Breathing exercises
- Find guidance with phone apps or YouTube

Meditation

- Somatic
- Guided imagery
- Walking meditation
- Tapping meditation





Deep breathing

- Foundation of mindfulness
- Always available
- Connection with our body
- Focus our mind
- Releases emotions

Source: helpguide.org

Connecting to your breath

- Start by bringing your attention to the sensations in your body
- Breathe in through your nose, allowing the air downward into your lower belly. Let your abdomen expand fully
- Now breathe out through your mouth
- Notice the sensations of each inhalation and exhalation
- Proceed with the task at hand slowly and with full deliberation
- Engage your senses fully. Notice each sight, touch and sound so that you savor every sensation
- When you notice that your mind has wandered from the task at hand, gently bring your attention back to the sensations of the moment



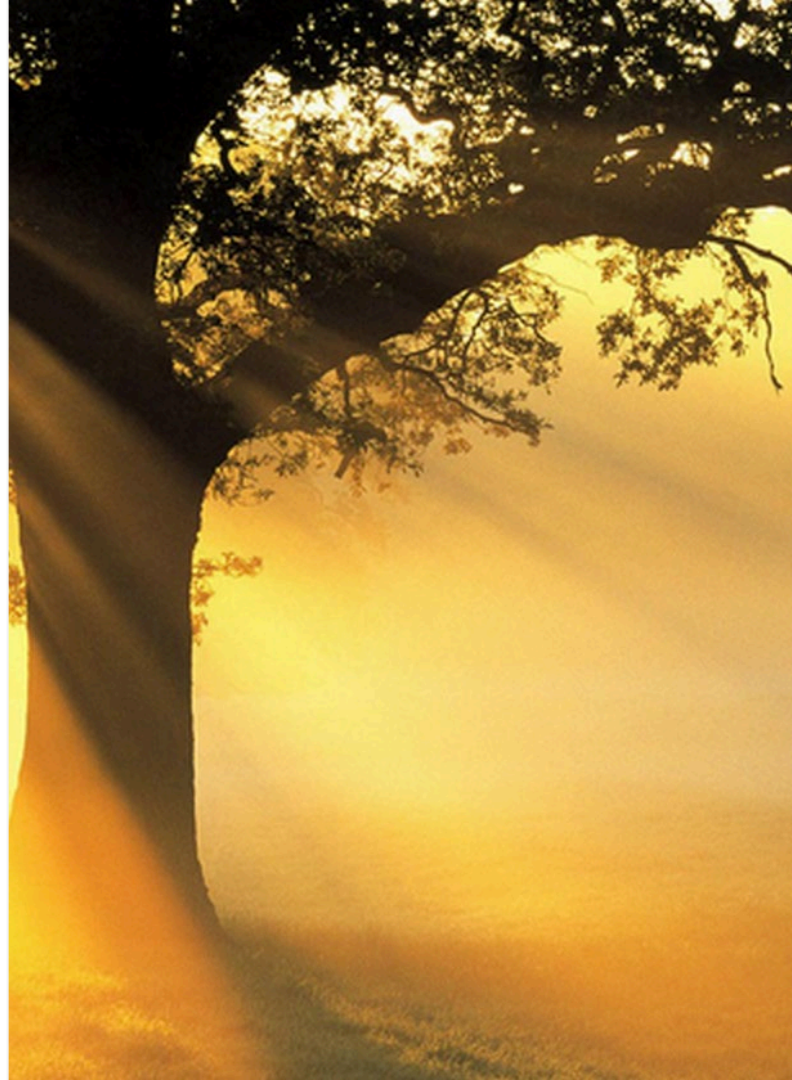
Breathing exercises

- Box breathing
- Alternate nostril breathing
- 4 – 7 – 8 breathing
- 5 finger breathing
- Focus word
- Wim Hoff breathing
- Diaphragmatic breathing

Guided imagery

- Uses imagery to achieve relaxation
- Improves sleep
- Decreases pain
- Reduces anxiety and depression

Source: [How Guided Imagery Helps You Relax](#)





Mindful eating

Slow down

- Eliminate distractions
- See, smell and taste
- Set utensil down between bites

Tune in to your body's signals

- Hunger vs. emotional eating
- Notice when full

Connect more deeply with your food

- Where it comes from
- How it's prepared

Source: [Mindful Eating](#)

Single tasking

Petting the dog

Drinking coffee

A favorite hobby

Giving one thing your full attention

Slowing down to engage all
of your senses

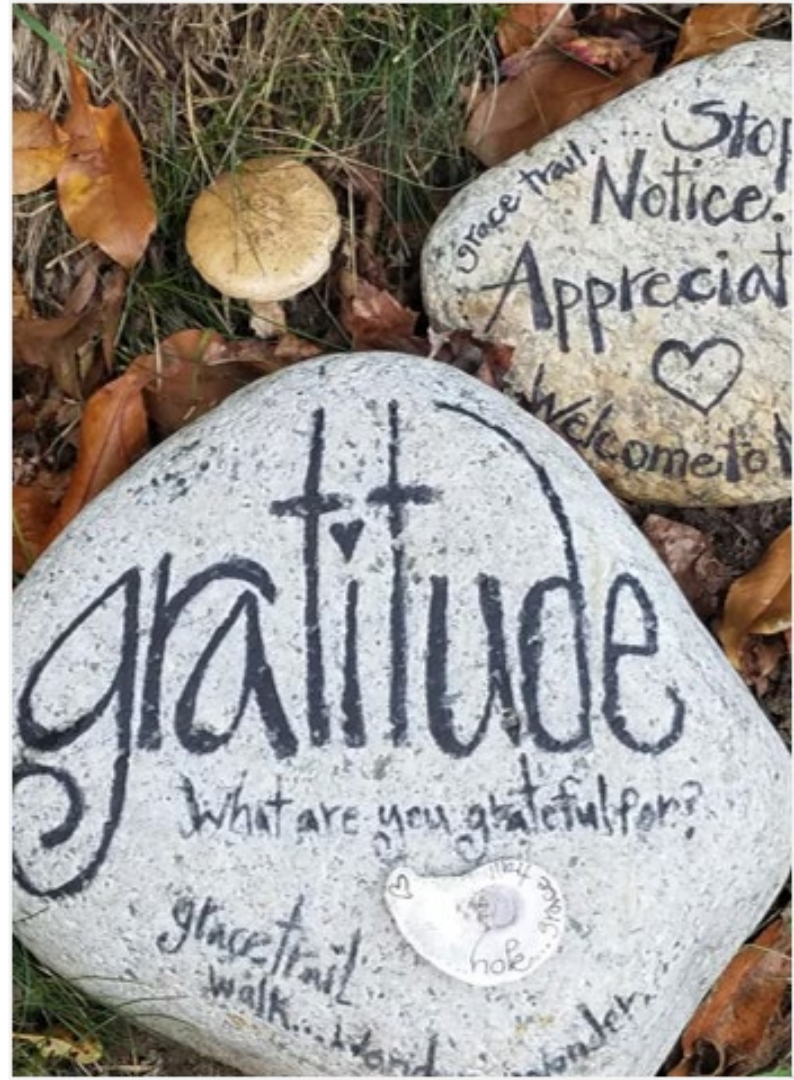
Get curious:

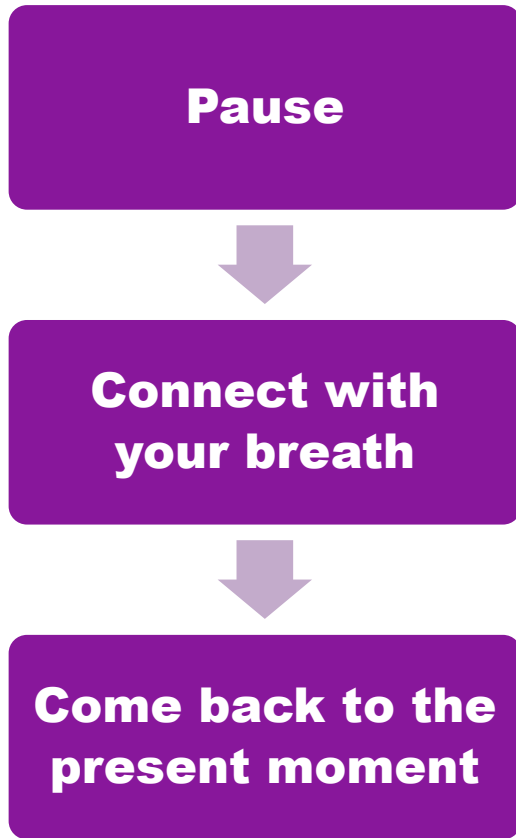
- What do you see, hear and smell?
- How does your body feel?
- What emotions do you notice?

Gratitude

- A recognition that:
 - There's goodness in our lives; gifts or benefits that we enjoy
 - This goodness is often because of the actions of another person

Source: Emmons, 2003 & 2007: *The Greater Good Science Center, Berkeley*;
Morin, 2014: *Positive Psychology*





Getting distracted?

That's normal!

Mindfulness is a health tool to be practiced, not perfected.

Resources for exploring mindfulness

PHONE APPS

- Headspace
- Calm
- Insight Timer
- Smiling Mind
- Your favorite music or podcast app

YOUTUBE

- Mindful moments
- Guided meditations
- Breathing exercises
- Yoga
- Tai-chi

What mindful tool are you excited to try?

- a) Breathing exercises
- b) Walking meditation
- c) Single tasking
- d) Mindful eating
- e) Guided imagery



GEHA member resources

- Elevate and Elevate Plus plans
 - Rally digital health platform
 - Learn more at geha.com/WellnessPays
- High, Standard and HDHP plans
 - GEHA well-being portal
 - Learn more at geha.com/HealthRewards
- All GEHA plans
 - Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
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The information contained herein is for informational and educational purposes only. This information is not a substitute for professional medical advice and if you have questions regarding a medical condition, regimen, or treatment you should always seek the advice of a qualified health care provider. Never disregard or delay seeking medical advice from a qualified medical professional because of information you have read herein.

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