



mind your body

PSYCHOLOGY • DIETETICS • FITNESS



Autumn 2019

FEATURING IN THIS EDITION:
The 'How' Skills Of Mindfulness
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Welcome Stephanie And Harry

The 'How' Skills Of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is an interesting skill that has so many health benefits for us. Not only does our health benefit but so too does our mind and our body. For those starting out or those skilled at the art of mindful attention, it is always good to have a reminder of what the skills of mindfulness are and 'how' to apply them to your life, whether formally or informally.

Here are the key 'how' skills for you to practise and some options of how to incorporate mindfulness into your everyday life so that you can access some of these benefits.

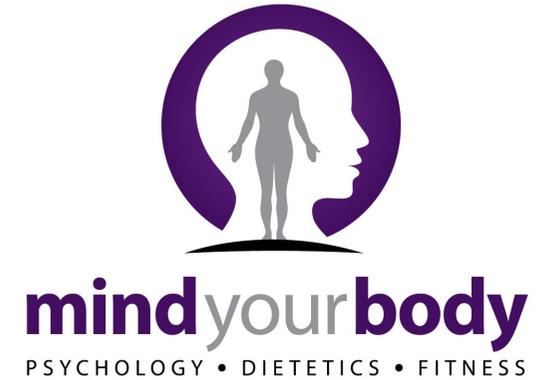
1. Non-Judgmentally - practise observing situations, people, thoughts, feelings, experiences from a position of description. Take the judgement out of the observation—just see it for what it is or is not. Judgement is a natural part of our thinking brains, but the art of noticing the judgement is one that takes practise.
2. One-Mindfully - stop multi-tasking every aspect of your life. Do one thing at a time and do it with presence and attention. If you are eating, just eat—remove all distractions like your phone, the television or laptop.
3. Effectively - practise, practise, practise and refine your skills. Develop and strengthen those muscles of attention and present moment awareness. The more you use them, the stronger they get.

Try eating your dinner mindfully, brush your teeth with focus, walk and describe what you see without judgement, be aware of and notice the art of breathing. Each day you can set a reminder to practise a skill more mindfully. Alternatively, find a mindfulness App and sign up to a challenge. See if you can find an activity that can be your mindfulness reminder each day—for me, it is making my morning coffee and brushing my teeth. What will yours be?

By Emma Warne



Mind The Gap



Just stop for a minute and consider this – what are your relationships with silence, boredom and spare time? What do you do when you have those “gaps” in your day for a few seconds or few minutes, the in between times?

Most of us in this world full of technology are guilty of filling the gaps at every opportunity – it could be checking your phone while you are waiting in a waiting room, making calls while you are sitting in traffic, checking social media while the ads are on TV, etc.

This may not seem like anything harmless to do, and in fact, we have been encourage to multi-task, to value busyness, to achieve as much as we can in the time we have. But at what cost?

Think about what you are training your mind to do when you fill every gap in your day – we are training our minds to be active in every moment of every day, and to be intolerant of silence and boredom. Yes, this may be helping us to achieve more, but in the long run we are losing much more – losing the ability to switch off during the day and feel comfortable in quiet environments (i.e. at bed time). We are losing the ability to utilise the natural stop-gaps that used to be there to reset, recharge and notice the world around us. This is why mindfulness has been so popular recently, as people are discovering their natural ability to be mindful has been eroded by the habits we have developed in modern life.

So – what can you do about it?

Practise leaving some of your daily “gaps” unfilled every day, by actions such as:

- Immerse yourself in one activity at a time instead of trying to do multiple things at once.
- Sit in a waiting room without getting your phone out as a distraction – notice the things around you, the people, the sounds.
- “Good drivers just drive” – take the advice of the ads on TV and try to avoid multi-tasking in the car. Even try driving without music/radio on!
- Go for a walk without your phone or iPod .
- Turn off background noise (i.e. TV, radio) from time to time and enjoy the natural sounds around you. Get used to silence again, starting with a few minutes at a time.
- Practise small acts of mindfulness – take short breaks throughout your day to be in the present moment and notice what is going on around you and within your body and mind.
- Try a progressive muscle relaxation or mindful meditation before bedtime to help wind down, or attend group meditation sessions (e.g. www.thezenroom.com.au).

Mindful-why?

Sometimes we are reminded just how fabulous and miraculous our minds are. I was reminded of this recently and it made me revisit some interesting facts that we know about mindfulness and our body.

I am sure your clinician has been talking to you about practising mindfulness and you have perhaps even given it a go, when you remember! Who I am I kidding? Even I struggle at times to practise daily and I know first-hand and through all my training how fabulous the outcomes are.

When we practise mindfulness regularly there are numerous health benefits that we experience. From a broader perspective, we feel more connected, more aware, more observant and are able to regulate our emotions more effectively. From the body's perspective, we are able to enhance healing, the immune response, stress management and overall feelings of wellbeing. At an internal level, we release all those lovely feel good hormones – oxytocin, serotonin, dopamine, and relaxin to name a few. Our body and mind work together to create a space where we can observe thoughts, feelings and body states more effectively and with less struggle.

Without getting into psychobabble, we also know that people who practise mindfulness regularly are less likely to relapse into Depression, have a better ability to fight infection, can manage pain more effectively, are interpersonally more effective, and feel more enriched in their daily lives. They hold onto less of the past or future thinking, and have the experience of being here, now.

Perhaps this could be an opportunity to start a mindfulness practice to test out this theory? Why not set yourself a 14-day challenge, let us know about it on our FaceBook page and keep us up to date with how you are going (<https://www.facebook.com/Mind-Your-Body-129949871322>).

A few of our favourite Apps to aid in the process: *Smiling Mind* - *HeadSpace* - *Breathe-reachout.com*

And three steps to practise:

One-minute breathing exercise Sit with your back straight but relaxed. For the next minute, focus your entire attention on breathing in and out, notice how air passes in and out of your nostrils, and how your abdomen rises and goes down with each breath.

Check in with yourself Bring yourself into the present moment by asking yourself, 'What is going on with me at the moment?' You can label your thoughts and feelings - for example, 'that's an anxious feeling' - and let them go.

Eat mindfully When you're having a meal, focus on your eating. Don't read or watch TV at the same time. Pay attention to how the food looks, smells and tastes. You may find you enjoy your food more and stop eating when you're full instead of automatically finishing what's on your plate. One thing at a time!

For more information check out these websites:

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/benefits-of-mindfulness>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/benefits-of-mindfulness/>



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Mind Your Body is excited to introduce two new psychologists to the team

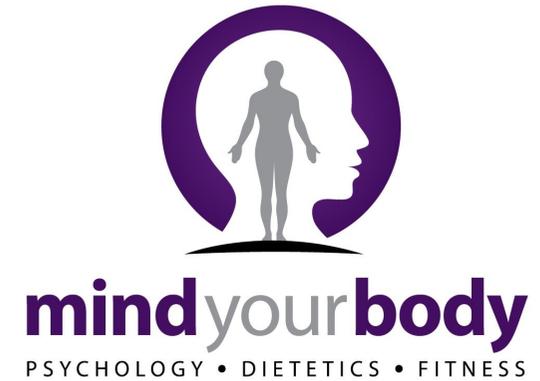


Meet Stephanie - Psychologist

Stephanie works with the client to develop goals and deliver evidence-based therapies to fit client presentation and needs; commonly using Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing among other approaches. She also has an interest in attachment therapies to overcome the impacts of early trauma.

Among many interests in clinical psychology, Stephanie is interested in:

- The importance of connection and relationships for mental health.
- Interaction of the mind and body, particularly how the body responds to trauma, grief, and states of distress.



Meet Harry - Psychologist

Harry is a registered psychologist, he has considerable experience working with people experiencing stress and anxiety (particularly workplace-related) and can help clients deal with traumatic events. Harry is also experienced in providing career counselling and can offer guidance in developing your professional confidence in your current job right through to helping you to explore alternative career paths. Harry is also experienced in dealing with a range of addictions and other mental health barriers to attaining/maintaining employment and general life fulfilment.



Harry employs a range of evidence-based therapeutic approaches but primarily uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Solution Focussed Brief Therapy (SFBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT).

Harry has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons Psychology – first class) from the University of Adelaide and a Graduate Diploma Business Administration from the South Australian Institute of Technology. He has also completed the Advanced Certificate in Evidence Based Executive Coaching from The Institute of Coaching and Consulting Psychology (Sydney University).