

3 Minute Breathing Space and Mindful Check In

Step One - Become aware of your experience right now

Bring your awareness to what is happening right now for you, going through each of the following one step at a time. As much as possible, bring a sense of curiosity and kindness.

- What sensations do you notice in your body? You might scan your body to pick up on any tightness, tension or areas of either comfort or discomfort.
- What thoughts are going through your mind? Acknowledging the nature or content of thoughts without getting caught up in the thoughts themselves.
- What feelings are here? Turning toward any emotional discomfort or unpleasant feelings and acknowledging their presence, without needing to do anything about them. If pleasant emotions are here, savor them and feel into the sensations of pleasant.

Step Two – Gather Your Attention

Bring your focus to the physical experience of breathing or to any other anchor that is supportive of settling and focusing your attention (e.g., sensations in feet, hands, or body in chair; sound). Whenever your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your chosen anchor.

Step Three – Expand Your Awareness

Now expand the field of your awareness to become aware of the body as whole, sitting and breathing, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, your posture, facial expression, places where your body comes in contact with the floor or the chair. Then expand your awareness even further outward, to include the feel of the air in the room and the space around you. As best you can, bring this expanded and more spacious awareness into the next moments of your day. In this way, your “doing” can flow naturally from your “being.”

Benefits of the Mindful Check In

This is a very useful practice to use from time to time throughout the day to reconnect with, reboot and rebalance the body and mind. It is also a strategic practice that moves attention in specific ways to get unstuck from unhelpful thought patterns and automatic routines. The attention moves from wide to narrow to wide, like an hourglass, and allows for changes in perception. This movement of attention is very important because when we are lost in thoughts, worrying, caught up in automatic pilot routines, multitasking or experiencing stress reactivity, our attention is often not really available to us and we are unable to consciously and skillfully choose how we want to respond to what is arising in our life moment to moment. This practice brings us back into a direct experience of the present moment, with all of the information, wisdom and resources available in that state of being.