



## MINDFUL MARCH: NURTURING MENTAL WELL-BEING THROUGH SMALL DAILY HABITS

Finding moments of calm and focus can be challenging, but we're dedicating March to cultivating even more acts that support mindfulness. Discover how daily activities can positively impact your mindset and contribute to a more resilient and balanced life.

'Mindfulness is the intentional and non-judgmental focus on the present moment. It allows individuals to gain better control over overwhelming thoughts and emotions, leading to improved subjective well-being,' says Safia Joseph, wellness training lead at Life Health Solutions. According to Safia, mindfulness enhances our ability to self-regulate emotions, manage thoughts, and make better decisions. 'The psychological benefits are extensive, including reduced rumination, stress reduction, increased focus, and enhanced cognitive abilities,' she adds.

### CULTIVATING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCE

Cultivating emotional well-being and resilience Safia emphasises that mindfulness helps individuals tap into their minds' inherent resilience. 'Fostering a present-moment awareness reduces worry about the past or future, promotes self-acceptance, and transforms the way we relate to sensations, emotions, thoughts and feelings,' she shares. 'By practising mindfulness, individuals can cope more effectively with stress and adversity, acknowledging discomfort and

taking purposeful action.'

### SMALL DAILY HABITS FOR PROMOTING MINDFULNESS

Safia recommends simple yet powerful daily habits to promote mindfulness:

- **Breathing focus:** Take three deep breaths and spend two to three minutes focusing on your breath when distracted.
- **Gratitude practices:** Express gratitude by listing three things you're thankful for before meals.
- **Avoid multitasking:** Combat the distractions of the modern world by focusing on one task at a time.
- **Pay attention:** Notice details in your surroundings, such as the sensation of your feet, to slow down in a busy world.
- **Live in the moment:** Intentionally bring open, accepting attention to everything you do.
- **Self-acceptance:** Treat yourself with the kindness you would offer to a good friend.

### IMPACT ON MINDSET OVER TIME

Training the mind to control what you pay attention to is indeed possible. 'Through mindfulness, you can learn to recognise intrusive thoughts and negative attitudes and



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behaviours that creep up when you're on automatic pilot,' says Safia. She goes on to say that all of this helps to direct your focus on one thing – the present moment. 'By giving that moment your full attention, you can fully accept the reality of the situation or how you are feeling, which, in turn, will help to determine what you can control so you can take purposeful action.'

## EXPLORING MEDITATION TECHNIQUES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Safia practises various meditation techniques, such as mindfulness, loving-kindness, body scanning, breath awareness, and progressive muscle relaxation. Research indicates that these techniques can positively affect memory, self-awareness, and stress regulation, promoting emotional resilience.

## THE ROLE OF GRATITUDE IN MINDFULNESS

Practising gratitude, Safia notes, allows individuals to notice blessings amid life's difficulties. It fosters a growth mindset, enhances self-esteem, resilience, and strengthens relationships. Mindful individuals exhibit better self-control and are less impulsive, leading to improved overall well-being.

## MANAGING STRESS AND ACHIEVING BALANCE THROUGH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness reduces activity in the amygdala, the brain region associated with stress responses, effectively lowering background stress levels. By focusing on the present moment and accepting discomfort, individuals can manage stress and achieve balance.

Safia suggests focusing on the breath as a simple and effective way to calm the nervous system during high-stress situations. 'By observing sensations without judgement, you can reflect before reacting, promoting a more measured response,' she says.

## BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE WITH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness encourages a proactive approach to challenges, as individuals learn to Stop, Observe, Accept, and Respond (SOAR). 'Reactive is how we usually react on autopilot, but with mindfulness training, we can become proactive,' says Safia. 'When we step out of autopilot, we allow ourselves to form a more intentional and resilient response to difficulties.' She encourages readers to view mindfulness as a form of attentive listening, allowing you to free yourself from autopilot mode and reconnect with the present moment.

*The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a professional. E&OE.*



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