

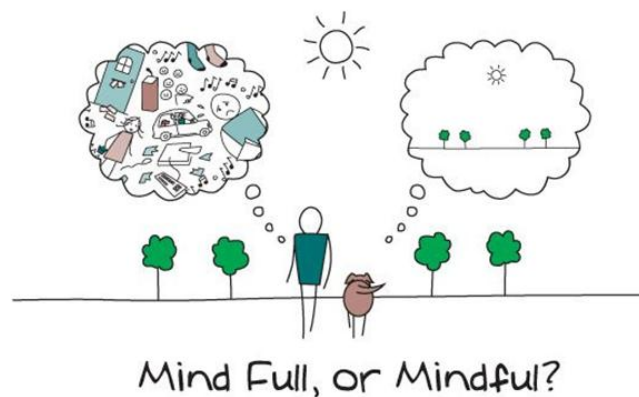


# Mindfulness



Mindfulness is simply the process in which you focus on the present moment and clear your mind of problems and worries. Mindfulness techniques are thought to help with one's well-being and to improve health in ways such as reducing stress and helping to improve sleep. It has been shown that "losing yourself" in some activity, such as being absorbed in a puzzle, colouring page or similar, can be a great way to help you relax and focus "on the moment".

Some children, understandably, are having a hard time concentrating on working at home. There are a lot of things going on their normally safe little worlds that are confusing them and taking up too much space in the heads. Giving them mindful brain breaks should help them relax and refocus on the task in hand. In our school handouts we will include some of these activities alongside breathing, self-soothing and visualisation guides and some useful links to online help and activities from other related agencies that may help.



- Colouring, puzzles etc need to be done for at least 5 minutes to be beneficial (your brain needs time to refocus) and should be done alone (unless of course you would like the mindful moment as well)
- Breathing, meditating and visualisation exercises will usually need longer and an adult or older sibling to read the instructions. These are better read through before you start so you know what's coming and when to pause for the child to respond. Try to read instructions in a low, calm, relatively slow manner for best results.

(3rd Edition, Keystage 2)

## Self-soothing activities: Bedtime yoga poses

### Why Is Yoga Beneficial for Children?

Whether it is during the evening hours to help with a bedtime routine or during the day, yoga is beneficial for children. Here are 10 reasons why children should do yoga:

1. **increases physical activity.** It is recommended that children participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Yoga is an excellent choice since it can be performed indoors or outdoors and in small spaces.
2. **teaches children to relax.** Children's schedules are super busy – school, extra-curricular activities, sports, etc. Today's children need to reduce stress with relaxation techniques.
3. **is for all children.** Yoga can be modified to be completed by all children including those with physical disabilities making yoga a great choice for an inclusion activity.
4. **helps children** to control their emotions. Deep breathing exercises can help children to reduce anxiety and calm down in stressful situations.
5. **helps with self-regulation skills.** Children learn how to respond to and control their body.
6. **improves muscle strength and flexibility.** Growing up today in this sedentary, technology filled world takes a toll on an individual's body. Children will need to work hard to maintain a healthy body. When children maintain good flexibility and muscle strength they can prevent injuries during sporting activities.
7. **helps to improve attention span and focus.** Children need to concentrate during yoga poses which in turn can help them to increase their attention span and focus.
8. **helps children develop balance and coordination skills.** Coordinating the movements of yoga poses combined with balance skills on one foot, knees or upside down can be challenging.
9. **improves posture.** Children spend so much time sitting at their school desks, leaning over a keyboard or hunched over a cell phone. Yoga poses can help to improve spinal alignment and posture.
10. **helps children develop listening skills.** Children have to listen to the directions how to move their body including right and left directionality.

**As school is slowing reopening to pupils, the first worry might be getting back into going to bed early and waking up in time.**

### Four Suggestions for an Effective Bedtime Routine

One of the easiest ways to accomplish a regular sleep schedule is to follow a daily routine. Not only will a daily routine help your child, but it also helps parents to set the stage for a good night's sleep, so both parents and children will wake up refreshed and ready to start another happy and productive day. Here are 4 simple suggestions for an effective bedtime routine:

- Limit vigorous physical activity before bed creating a calming atmosphere. Begin to calm a child down before bed with this bedtime yoga sequence to help the transition to sleep time.
- Turn off the television/computer/tablet/phone at least 30 minutes before bed.
- Establish a routine in the evening – bedtime yoga sequence, brush teeth, read for 20 minutes and go to bed.
- Try to stick with the routine especially with regular bedtimes and morning wake up times.

### How to Do the Bedtime Yoga Sequence

When you are starting to wind down for the evening, lay out a yoga mat or beach towel on the floor. Move through the following yoga poses spending about 30 seconds to 1 minute on each pose depend upon the child's age and attention span.

See routine overleaf:

# Bedtime Yoga Sequence

8 poses to help you get ready to sleep



Easy Pose



Camel Pose



Bridge Pose



Upward Facing Dog



Knees to Chest



Twist Pose



Child's Pose



Corpse Pose

**Twist Pose: remember to do both legs**

## Relaxing:

If you've been watching Springwatch Live you'll notice that each night they have a "Mindful Minute"; a minute where they ask you to turn phone to silent and just be still while they show you the sights and sounds of somewhere outside in nature eg a woodland.

Even better than this is listening to it live. With this amazing weather we have been having, it is perfect to get outside and just lie and listen. Appreciate those natural sounds, smells and sights.

Start with just 1 minute a day, if you are more patient, increase this. 10 minutes is a good amount. If doing the minute, try writing down what you heard afterwards. (Try to hear more things each day)

Try different environments, where can you hear best?

If it rains, try to find a link on Youtube or a mindfulness page online.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKFTSSKCzWA>

## Brain exercisers:

### COUNTDOWN NUMBERS

Can you make the target number from the given numbers? You can use any maths operation. If you find it quickly, well done, but can you find it a different way too?

**100   25   8   5   3   6                      target= 695**

### COUNTDOWN LETTERS

Can you find the 9 letter word? How many other words can you make, using the letters only once each?

**L   E   S   N   I   S   O   S   E**

### ALPHABET

Can you list a country for every letter of the alphabet? Which letter do you think has the most countries?

CAN YOU SPOT 15 DIFFERENCES IN THE PICTURE BELOW?

