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## How to Ground: Mindfulness and Meditation

### What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a state of being where we learn to live life in the present moment and experience each moment with an open and accepting awareness.

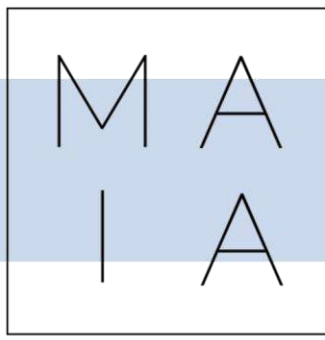
Acceptance doesn't mean we agree with or condone every situation, it just means we are choosing not to resist against what already is. In this way we are removing a layer of emotion that prevents us from finding solutions and peace.

As humans we seek pleasure and avoid pain. When we feel sad or anxious we often struggle with it, wishing we could feel happy and at ease. This is only natural. However, by doing this we often get stuck in a cycle of ignoring our feelings (usually in the form of numbing with food, alcohol, drugs, television, work or sleep) which ultimately keeps us stuck in our distress and also sends the unconscious message that it is not ok to feel certain emotions. Even if they are valid.

Cultivating mindfulness allows us to learn to be in the present moment regardless of whether it is a positive, negative or neutral experience and to stay grounded enough to respond to life and whatever arises, rather than unconsciously reacting to it or numbing. This in turn increases our confidence to navigate life and our emotions and allows us to fully experience and enjoy life from moment to moment.

### **Mindfulness is:**

- Acceptance of our present moment experience
- Making room for discomfort
- Letting go of struggle and numbing as a response to our emotions
- Non judgementally showing up for positive, negative and neutral experiences
- Everything we feel is meant to be felt, all feelings are valid



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## How to Cultivate Mindfulness through Meditation:

### Structured Breathing Technique:

This structured breathing technique utilises the breath in a specific way to deactivate the fight/flight response in the body and calm the central nervous system so we can feel more grounded, safe and relaxed.

With this technique we utilise a 2:2:4, 3:3:6 and 4:4:8 counting method.

For example, we inhale deeply through the nose for 2 counts, pause and hold the breath for 2 counts and then exhale slowly through the mouth for 4 counts.

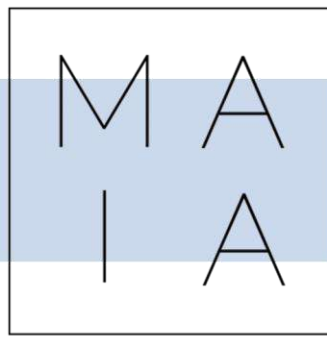
What is most important is that the exhalation is twice as long as the inhalation. This is because the exhalation is the relaxing and grounding part of the breath cycle.

Take a moment now to breath in deeply and exhale completely and notice how it feels to breath out. Yummy, right? Unfortunately, the exhalation is often the part of the breath cycle that we pay the least attention to. In fact, it is not uncommon for people to be unconsciously holding their breath throughout the day or breathing very shallow. Particularly when we are stressed or anxious.

Practising this technique will help you to become more conscious of your breathing and to utilise your exhalations throughout the day to help calm, ground and centre yourself.

### **Benefits of Grounding Breath Meditations**

- Regain a sense of control within despite what is happening externally
- Reduce stress
- Alleviate anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Improve sleep
- Enhance self-awareness
- Cultivate self-compassion
- Improve attention-span and focus
- Improve overall emotional and mental health and wellbeing



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### Practise makes perfect:

Meditation is a skill that can be learned. Psychologists agree that when a skill is practised consistently, it generally takes about 28 days to change a habit or learn a new skill. This means that in as little as 4 weeks, with consistent daily practise, you can be feeling less stressed, increasingly happy and more in control of your emotions and life. And who doesn't want that, right?

So, what are you waiting for lovely? Why not put this theory to the test and commit to yourself, your happiness and your overall wellbeing today by practising the short 10 minute guided meditation provided each day for the next 4 weeks and see and feel the results for yourself.

You won't regret it!

Happy Breathing ☺

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