

# Practice During The Day

With mindfulness and meditation there is formal and informal practice. Formal practice is when one sets the regular activities of the day aside and commits time to meditation or mindfulness practice, often in the form of sitting meditation, walking meditation, yoga or some other specific technique. Informal practice, then, is everything else in one's life. The aspiration is to live, moment-to-moment, in a more mindful way.

Every meditation teacher will encourage students to work toward doing some formal practice on a daily basis (being especially kind to oneself, of course, when the practice does not occur daily). Even when regular activities are not set aside for formal practice, we can still work moments of focused practice into the course of the day, often in the “inbetween spaces” that naturally occur during the day. These moments of practice nurture our ability to touch and affirm something important and can significantly strengthen our foundation of mindfulness.

Listed below are just a few ideas for doing practice in the regular course of the day. It is important to be gentle with yourself and not take on too much. If any of the ideas appeal to you, pick just one and commit yourself to practicing it consistently for at least a couple of weeks before adding something else.

**\*As you awaken in the morning, bring attention to your breathing. Instead of immediately getting caught in spinning mind, take a few mindful breaths and sense the effect on your mind, body and emotions.**

**\* Before you fully awaken, think of a positive image or setting to avoid getting caught in dread or anxious anticipation that can so easily capture your attention. Experiment with having a photo of the positive image or setting next to your bed and spending just a few seconds focusing on it before you get up.**

**\*Be careful not to get caught in a sense of rushing into your day. If you notice that you are rushing, pause for just for a moment and settle the energy with a few mindful breaths.**

**\* Notice something special about the morning: a flower that bloomed, the sounds of the birds, the wind, the warmth of the sun, the color in the landscape.**

**\* Use the time driving to work or to other activities to check in with your body, mind and emotions. Settle yourself and spend a few minutes doing some conscious breathing.**

**\* Use the walk from the car to your work or other activity to focus on your breath and disengage from thoughts.**

**\* When you arrive at work or are about to begin a project, take a few moments to breathe consciously and relax your body before beginning.**

**\* Use the time it takes to walk to the bathroom, or any other location during the day, to settle the busy mind and focus on mindful breathing.**

**\* Convert waiting times into a few moments of mindfulness practice – for example, at the bank, in the grocery store, waiting on hold on the phone or at a red light.**

**\* In returning home from work or other activities, use part of the drive time to make the transition mindfully. Check in with your mind/body/emotions and settle any tension or stress that you are carrying from the day. Set an intention about the attitude you would like to cultivate for the evening.**

**\* As you get ready to go to sleep, take just a minute to mindfully review the day. Ask yourself questions such as: Is there anything I want to learn from today – something that went well or that I would do differently? Is there anything I need to settle or let go of? Do I need to set a reminder (or even write a note) for tomorrow so I can let go of something for the time being?**

**\* Before going to sleep, take a few relaxing breaths. Experiment with bringing attention to your positive image and setting the intention to have a restful sleep.**