

Mindfulness in Medicine

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Research from *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and *The Annals of Family Medicine Journal* related to physicians practicing mindfulness revealed the following findings:

- Physician participation in a mindful communication program was associated with short-term and sustained improvements in well-being and attitudes associated with patient centered care.¹
- Participating in an abbreviated mindfulness training course adapted for primary care clinicians was associated with reductions in indicators of job burnout, depression, anxiety and stress.²
- Mindful physicians engage in more patient-centered communication and have more satisfied patients.³

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, founder and former director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, is generally considered to have been the one to have initiated bringing the origins of mindfulness in Buddhist teaching to the West.

Definition of Mindfulness

Dr. Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as, “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.

The purpose of mindfulness is to assist you in keeping your mind from wandering to distracting, worrisome thoughts that keep you from being present in the moment, and negatively impact mood and energy.



The great thing about mindfulness is how easy it is to practice and that it is evidence based. Although there are mindfulness techniques for daily meditation, there are also a variety of opportunities for practicing informal mindfulness. For busy medical practitioners, these informal mindfulness practices provide an effective, simple way to manage stress and build resiliency. If you’re considering mindfulness but don’t know where to start, log on to your VITAL WorkLife App to access mindfulness resources. Our consultants and coaches can also work with you to incorporate a mindfulness practice into your daily life.

Mindfulness strategies might include:

- Taking a few deep breaths from the diaphragm throughout your day, focusing on the flow of your breath.
- Focus on a word or “mantra” that you repeat to yourself throughout the day⁴ (You can find a variety of other informal mindfulness strategies in this [Harvard Health](#) article)
- Spending time in nature with focused attention on all that is around you.
- Intentionally pausing before you move into your next case, and observe the sights and sounds surrounding you.

- Ask yourself what you are feeling a few times a day. You don't need to fix difficult feelings, just be aware of them.
- Take a brief walk and be aware of your feet carrying you and the sensations experienced by your feet as they move.

Mindfulness Videos

- [Mindfulness Monday Video Series with Yael Rubin, PhD, LP, Psychologist](#)
- [What is Mindfulness by Jon Kabat, Zinn, PhD](#)
- [Identify Stress and Burnout with Mindfulness Tactic with Maureen Dorgan-Clemens, MS, LCPC, CADC, CPDC](#)

Mindfulness is especially suited to physicians and providers because it can help counteract the worrying, perfectionism and self-judgment that are so common among doctors. Try it informally or learn more about how to create and sustain a structured practice for everyday living. Your VITAL WorkLife App has more mindfulness articles, tools and videos.

We Can Help.

Peer coaches are available to assist you in finding efficient ways to build mindfulness into your daily life. We can direct you to online resources, classes available virtually or in your own community, and we can offer simple strategies and techniques to having a more mindful approach to your work and personal life.

To get started, contact VITAL WorkLife at 877.731.3949 or schedule an appointment through the VITAL WorkLife App. The app also includes additional mindfulness articles, tools and videos with mindfulness exercises.



Sources:

¹ JAMA. 2009;302(12):1284-1293

² Ann Fam Med September/October 2013 vol. 11no. 5 412-420. doi: 10.1370/afm.1511

³ Ann Fam Med September/October 2013 vol. 11no. 5 421-428. doi:10.1370/afm.1507

⁴ <https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>