



What is mindfulness and how can it help?

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

The term **mindfulness** means **intentionally paying attention** to whatever is being experienced with an attitude of **openness and curiosity**. Being aware of experiences as they occur gives us information about our automatic reactions, as well as the space and confidence we need to choose how to respond.

HOW CAN MINDFULNESS HELP ME?

There are a few key skills that help develop a person's ability to be more mindful. And research shows that practising these skills **lowers stress, builds self-confidence and improves health**. With outcomes like this, it's clear that we can all benefit from adding some mindfulness practice into our lives.

GETTING STARTED...

I've put together five brief instructional videos in the **HOSPO HEALTH** series that can take you through some of my favourite practical mindfulness exercises, as well as brief explainers about the intent and the benefits. It's a good idea to watch them in sequence, but feel free to jump about and start with the one that interests you most.

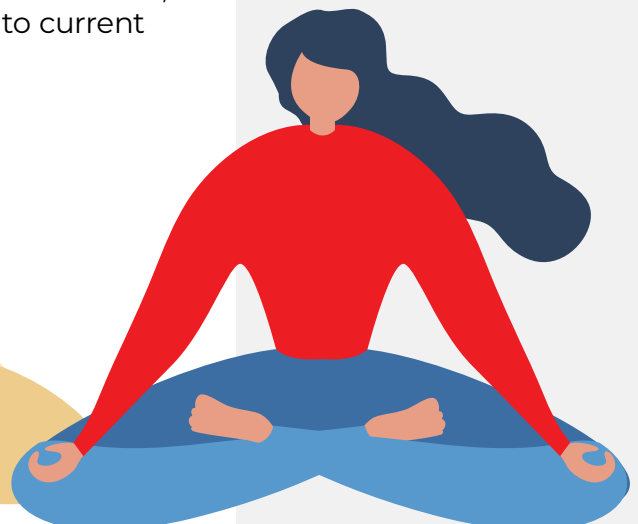
Here's an outline of what we'll focus on.

- 1 What's this mindfulness thing all about?** My first video introduces the key principles and practices of mindfulness.
- 2 How do I do this 'paying attention' thing?** Have you ever been told to pay better attention? In the second exercise I'll step you through a few minutes of tuning into your senses, which will help illustrate what paying attention to current experiences means.



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- 3 There is more right with you than wrong!** I'll introduce you to a classic mindfulness practice, the body scan. This exercise uses your body as a playground for sharpening the ability to place your attention where you want it to be, and to be curious and open about what you discover. I'll also talk you through the notion of interoception: how we make sense of the information we receive through our body's sensations.
- 4 To see, and then re-see.** This is another classic mindfulness practice, where the sensations of breathing are kept front-of-mind. This exercise reveals the many ways in which attention can be pulled away and leads to greater self-awareness. Patterns of thinking become clearer, and an attitude of curiosity and non-judging is cultivated. This particular mindfulness practice is great for gaining new perspectives on old patterns and problems.
- 5 Whatever the weather....** The focus of this session is about keeping steady. I'll introduce you to the idea of the self as a mountain: solid, steady, grounded, majestic, with the surrounding weather and ecosystems always changing. The mountain practice builds on the attentional and attitudinal skills developed through the body scan and breath practices and helps build a sense of calm.

Mindfulness practice is something all of us can benefit from, and importantly, the exercises that I've focused on in this series are examples that most people can learn and complete. I hope you'll tune into the **HOSPO HEALTH** videos to see these exercises in practice, and that you find them a useful skill set to build into your day-to-day life.

Whether you are a business owner or an employee, I encourage you see how mindfulness can make a positive impact on your work and life.



MINDFULNESS AT WORK

I've been practicing mindfulness for 11 years, and initially it was something for my personal interest and wellbeing. As I found my practice becoming more effective and valuable, I decided to dig deeper into the science behind mindfulness.

My PhD investigated mindfulness training in the workplace for employee stress, mental health, wellbeing and performance. I found that for people who feel inclined to do the mindfulness practices there is solid evidence of individual and inter-personal benefits.

The many demands of the hospitality industry – from the long or odd hours to the fast-paced environment of a crazy kitchen, busy bar or function room – place challenges on employees' stress, wellbeing, performance and mental health.

