

A Beginner's Guide to Headspace

Weekly practice guide



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A letter from the Headspace for Work Team

Hi there,

As employees on the Headspace for Work team, we are proud to offer resources to all of our members to **inspire, guide and support you** throughout their mindfulness journey. And right now, with the current global climate, our duty to support our members is even more pronounced. May – a time dedicated to building awareness and supporting conversations around mental health – offers the perfect opportunity to help guide one another. We created this five-week guide to help you build some habits and routines surrounding your mindfulness practice this month and thereafter.

As a part of our Headspace for Work community, you are helping us achieve our company's mission **to improve the health and happiness of the world**. This is a lofty goal, but we believe that each individual who signs up with Headspace through an employer helps us move towards this goal.

We hope this curated guide helps all Headspace for Work members find relevant content regardless of their industry, location, or team you are on. The suggestions we've provided will bring mindfulness to you – wherever you are. We've also included some of our own team's experiences with Headspace: you will find anecdotes throughout in the "Headspace Spotlight" sections.

We've structured the guide with suggested content for three key times of the day: before, during, and after the work day. We recommend starting your practice with the first week's theme: Welcome to Headspace. After that, you can choose to follow our suggestions or choose the topics that resonate the most with you. Simply navigate to the "Explore" tab on the app to find each exercise. You can easily anchor sessions to your current routines or transitions throughout the day.

We're honored to provide support and encouragement to help you build a healthy and happy routine that lasts a lifetime. Thank you for joining us on our journey to improve the health and happiness of the world.

Mindfully,

THE HEADSPACE FOR WORK TEAM

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Headspace

Meditation can have a positive effect on both mental and physical health. Start your program by focusing on key mindfulness techniques to create a healthier, happier life. Search for these animations and exercises under the "Explore" tab.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

Watch the "Take a tour of Headspace," "Am I Making Progress?" and "Free Your Mind" animations.

MORNING

Learn the techniques

- Body Scan animation
- Resting Awareness animation
- Focused Attention animation
- Loving Kindness animation
- Reflection animation
- Skillful Compassion animation
- Today's Headspace

MIDDAY

Overcoming common obstacles

- Sleepiness advice
- Impatience advice
- Motivation advice
- Worry advice
- Posture advice
- Itching advice

EVENING

Sleep exercises

- Switching Off
- Noting
- Deep Breathing
- Light Visualization

Our Headspace spotlight: Getting started with Headspace

"I started using Headspace when I lost my dad unexpectedly. Although I was seeing a therapist there wasn't much in the realm of cohesive and consistent self-guidance for me to explore. The Headspace Way taught me how to **better articulate my thoughts and feelings and how to face adversity armed with a tool kit**. Once I learned the basic fundamentals of mindfulness and coupled it with a routine practice, **my life began to improve in many ways**. I began to sleep again."

- Matt, LA

I first found [Headspace] while my mother was battling cancer... My dad also got sick during this time, so there was a lot of weight on my shoulders. Unfortunately, my mom eventually succumbed to the cancer, and to cap it all off, my girlfriend at the time broke up with me a month or so afterwards... The two things that got me through this time were therapy and meditation... With the pain of taking care of loved ones, losing a mother and a breakup all at once, **focusing on my breath was the only way I could lift the weight on my chest for a few brief moments**. The most profound lesson I still recall from that time was to **accept impermanence**, and a fundamental lack of everlasting security. I built my practice from that humble beginning and now, almost a decade later, I find myself working for a meditation company... Meditation and mindfulness have helped me in countless tough times since then, and I hope they can benefit others in similar ways."

- Iain, SF

"Like so many others, it was not until I was met with a particularly challenging personal situation that I decided to give [meditation] a try. The end of a nearly four year relationship was the hardship that ultimately led me to say "why not." My entrypoint to mindfulness and meditation was a 15-session intro course... When the course was over, my practice dropped off. I wasn't sure where to turn for guidance to really embed mindfulness and meditation into my life. Then I discovered Headspace... Knowing what I know now, it's easy to forget the mindset I had just a few years ago: that meditation was unnecessary, too big a commitment, just plain weird. I am consistently motivated by the knowledge that all of our work at Headspace is **ultimately helping to spread awareness of this potentially life changing practice** to those who might never have otherwise considered it.

- Libby, SF

WEEK 1

Building your practice

Headspace can reduce stress and increase happiness. This month is a particularly good time to start looking after your mind. Start with these exercises and navigate to the Basics course.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

If at any time throughout your practice, you are feeling stressed or burned out, visit our SOS meditations under the “Reframe stress and relax” tab.

MORNING

Exercises & inspiration

Visualization

Waking up

Today's Headspace

Early Mornings

Monkey Mind animation

Letting Go of Effort animation

MIDDAY

Exercises & inspiration

Remember the Blue Sky animation

Basics course

Restore

Stressed

Taking a Break

Reset

Alone Time

EVENING

Sleepcasts

Each evening before bed, choose from one of Headspace's sleepcasts

Our Headspace spotlight: Developing the habit

"I've struggled with ADD and anxiety most of my life, although I didn't really know what it was when I was young. I used to get hurt a lot, forget things and generally be extremely clumsy. I picked up some poor habits like drinking as a method to help calm my anxiety, which only made the forgetfulness and challenges focusing worse... My journey in discovering meditation and mindfulness was not linear. I started it and stopped it many times, not really understanding it. In the last few years, I've been meditating regularly... which has heightened my sense of awareness in both my mind and my body. This has led to basically no drinking at all anymore... I don't do silly things like leave my phone on the train anymore and I **generally feel more focused and get better sleep**. I've come to a point where I **couldn't imagine going back to the way I used to live my life, and I have meditation and mindfulness to thank for that.**"

"It was something that I was struggling with – getting the habit to stick. I knew a meditation practice would be helpful and really healthy. I had gone through my own wellness journey right after college so I wasn't a total stranger to building healthy/wellness habits. Then, a couple years ago I actually fractured my skull and had a concussion that lasted 6 months. A few weeks in, I saw a neurologist who suggested that I start meditating – that I really try to meditate as a part of my healing process... And being a [science inclined] person, and having grown up in a religious environment, it was really important to me to learn the science behind mindfulness and meditation... I spent a month learning about meditation and mindfulness; listening to podcasts, reading some books, and then decided to do the 10 free days of Headspace again.

On day six...I became a paid subscriber. This was the summer of 2017, and I started meditating every day.. **so much came from that that was unexpected**. In addition to helping me heal physically, so much personal growth and change. **Creating that space in my life to become aware of myself on a deeper level and to heal."**

– Dvora, NYC

WEEK 2

Handling stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety are inevitable – especially in the workplace. We hope to provide you some content to turn to in moments of high stress or anxiety.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

Show yourself some compassion! You're just getting started, and meditation is a skill to be practiced like any other.

MORNING

Exercises & inspiration

The Wake up
Today's Headspace
Remember the Blue Sky animation
Am I Making Progress? animation
Putting Down Our Phones advice

MIDDAY

Guided meditation

Managing Anxiety course
Letting Go of Stress
Taking a Break
Restore
Reset

EVENING

Sleep guided meditations

Goodnight
Switching Off
Falling Back to Sleep
Noting
Stiffness

Our Headspace spotlight: Headspace and stress

"A few years ago... I started meditating to work on myself and create healthy morning routines. Soon after, I had a really stressful time at work with pressures coming from all directions, I became snappy and irritable and just wanted to go to work then home to bed... my relationships were suffering and so I started to realise this is not me and who I wanted to be or how I wanted to react to these situations, so I started meditating again and was able to regulate my stress and see the situation from a different perspective....That time I took to meditate was the **time I had to myself to process and regulate how I felt in reaction** to this heightened sense of anxiety. My purpose and intent changes regularly but **every time I meditate, it's time for me to look after my mind, process what's going on and just take a breath.**"

- Lucy, London

"I came to meditation because of work. My first job after university led me to work in a recruitment agency. This industry has a very specific work-hard play-hard mindset. The sales environment was led by a micro-manager that pushed any sales person to work as hard as they possibly could. After a year, my mental health had started to suffer a lot. Unable to find any source of happiness or joy in my day-to-day life, I spoke to a close friend who was already using Headspace and [they] told me to give it a try. Using the app everyday - just 3 or 5 minutes a day - has **helped me refocus on my wellbeing, build my resilience and help clear my mind about my current situation at a given moment.** Using Headspace continues to build up my resilience and has also massively supported my anxiety issues."

WEEK 3

Loneliness

Loneliness is, at times, a universal feeling. Some of this content will help in reframing your thoughts about your own loneliness.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

Remember that we are social creatures. Be forgiving of yourself when you feel lonely. Check out our Community Story and the Mindful Moment for some insight / shared experiences from our members!

MORNING

Exercises & inspiration

The Wake up
Today's Headspace
Changing Perspective animation
Accepting the Mind animation
Can Being Lonely be OK? Advice

MIDDAY

Exercises & inspiration

Reframing Loneliness course
Shared Human Condition animation
Emptiness animation
Everybody Headspace (every 30 min)
Acceptance course

EVENING

Sleep meditations

Switching Off
Noting
Mental Chatter
Deep Breathing

Our Headspace spotlight: Headspace and loneliness

I've used Headspace for a few years. It was introduced to me by a therapist as a tool for meditation. I used it on and off for a while but I really see the most impact when I have a consistent routine. The most impactful course I've been through was "Reframing Loneliness." I've always felt quite lonely and never really knew how to deal with it. After listening to Andy speak about loneliness **I've been able to change the way I think about it and the way it affects me.** Realizing that **loneliness is something that most people feel** and it's **actually a way to bring us together** was life changing. It taught me how to be OK with these feelings and how to react to them. It's a course I'll do over and over to help strengthen my mental relationship with loneliness.

- Alicia, SF

WEEK 4

Happiness and compassion

Headspace can help improve compassion and focus, while reducing aggression – allowing stronger relationships at work and beyond.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

While we are increasing our compassion for others, we must also remember to treat ourselves with kindness. Lean in to the development of the skill and enjoy the journey.

MORNING

Exercises & inspiration

The Wake up

Today's Headspace

Big Mind, Small Mind animation

Happiness of Others animation

Loving Kindness animation

MIDDAY

Exercises & inspiration

Happiness course

Skillful Compassion animation

Listening to Others

Kindness course

Self-esteem course

EVENING

Exercises & inspiration

Precious Human Life animation

Noting

Compassion and Awareness

Light Visualization

Our Headspace spotlight: Increasing compassion

"I first came to Headspace as a recommendation from a therapist with the intention to manage my anxiety. After the Basics 10-day course, I was almost immediately hooked on Headspace. I started turning to meditation in moments of high anxiety, but also developing the habit regardless of external stressors. However, a more unexpected result from my meditation practice has been an increased sense of awareness for my surroundings - whether it be my family, my friends, my colleagues, the earth - Headspace has **allowed me a sense of compassion and awareness that I had not previously experienced**. With increased compassion, it becomes **easier to accept others despite their flaws, and in turn - easier to accept yourself as well**. My meditation practice with Headspace has undoubtedly impacted my own anxiety and self-esteem, and therefore the way I treat others."

- Rosey, SF

WEEK 5

Movement

Getting ourselves moving is a hugely important part of our mental health. Every bit counts and choose what works for you from the many options in the app.

TIP OF THE WEEK:

Explore all of the content under the Move tab. And remember – just getting out there is all that matters!

MORNING

Exercises & inspiration

The Wake up
Andy on Confidence
Meet our Trainers
Walking at Home

MIDDAY

Guided exercises

Week 1 – Intention (with Leon or Kim)
Intention Walk
Add Some Joy exercise
Moving with Purpose

EVENING

Guided exercises

Rest day meditations
Performance mindset meditations
Switching Off
Goodnight

Our Headspace spotlight: Moving with Headspace

"As someone who has prioritized HIIT and high cardio /muscle building workouts, Headspace [Move content] has brought **new balance to my fitness game in providing my rest day routine with the restorative workouts**. Just like Headspace has **added a habit to prioritize mindfulness and meditation to support my brain health**, it has now **helped to bring balance to how I pay attention to my physical health** - balancing endurance and strength training with flexibility and restoration."

- Larissa, LA

"My girlfriend and I are trying to do varied types of exercise each day of the week. Mondays are stadium days (run up and down stairs a lot), and they are REALLY hard, so we follow that Tuesday with a Headspace Move workout with Leo. It's been a **more restorative and pleasant break from the really hard ab and cardio workouts we've been doing**. My daughter even tries to participate sometimes. They are very approachable sets and **I love that we always pause to breathe in the middle**."

- Eric, SF

Helpful Resources

- **Mental health awareness month resources:**
<https://get.headspace.com/employer-toolkit>
- **The science behind meditation:**
<https://www.headspace.com/science>
- **The Orange Dot (our in-house blog):**
<https://www.headspace.com/blog/>
- **Everybody Headspace Facebook group:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/everybodyheadspace/>



You did it!

Congratulations

Continue your practice by navigating to your profile and finishing up one of the courses you began over the past five weeks.

