

The Power of Mindfulness



Mindfulness is a powerful tool to improve self-awareness and reduce stress. Election officials can benefit greatly from incorporating mindfulness exercises into their daily routine.

BENEFITS

- Increase self-awareness
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Enhanced focus and decision-making

QUICK EXERCISE/ACTIVITY

Mindful Breath Awareness

This can also be a great exercise when you feel you may be heading towards a moment of crisis - such as increased anxiety or a panic attack.

- 1 Find a quiet space to sit or stand comfortably.
- 2 Focus your attention on your breath, taking slow, deep breaths.
- 3 Pay close attention to the sensation of the breath entering and leaving your body.
- 4 Transition to “box breathing” - breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, out for four seconds, hold for four seconds.
- 5 When your mind wanders, gently bring your focus back to your breath.

Walking Meditation

- 1 As you begin walking, pay attention to each step.
- 2 Notice how many steps you take during each inhale and exhale, and at the speed you’re walking. Pay attention to your lungs, and do not force your breathing or the number of steps you take.
- 3 Match your steps to your breath. For example, as you breathe in, count 1-2-3 steps. As you breathe out, count 1-2-3 steps. Let your lungs and feet come to a happy equilibrium.
- 4 As you walk, you may consider saying a phrase that approximates the rhythm of your walking. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests, “With each step, a gentle wind blows.”



Bringing Awareness to Mundane Activities

Bring awareness to mundane activities that you may normally not think much about. In this example, we are using the practice of washing your hands.

- 1 Pay attention to the action of turning on the faucet, placing your hands under the water, and using the soap.
- 2 Feel the warm water, and the soapy suds on your hands.
- 3 Switch to cooler water for a few seconds, then back to warm water.
- 4 Keep your attention on the present. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back.
- 5 Rinse your hands, turn off the water, and notice the warmth and cleanliness of your hands.
- 6 Dry your hands, feeling the towel or hand dryer. Notice how your hands now feel compared to before you washed them.

Tips for Incorporation

- Dedicate a few minutes each day to this mindful breath awareness exercise.
- Start and/or end team meetings with this exercise.
- Establish a routine in your office, such as “Mindful Mondays”.
- Use a mobile app or set reminders to help you remember to take these quick mindful breaks.

Additional Resources

For more mindfulness tips and information, check out “[The Miracle of Mindfulness](#)” by Thich Nhat Hanh.

CONCLUSION

Mindfulness is a tool that can help you stay grounded and reduce stress. Practice these simple exercises regularly, and you will start to see benefits in both your professional and personal life.