

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment while noticing thoughts and feelings without judgment. It can help reduce feelings of nervousness, anger, or sadness caused by overwhelming thoughts. By practicing mindfulness, one can clear the mind and improve focus on the now. While it takes practice, various methods exist to enhance mindfulness skills.

### Mindfulness for Young Children

1. **Backyard Safari:** Tell your child you're going on a safari in the backyard. Ask them to find as many birds, bugs, and other animals as they can. Encourage them to really focus on finding tiny insects in the grass, listening for birds, or hearing dogs in the neighborhood. The more they use their senses, the more mindful they're being.
2. **Mindful Eating:** You can introduce your child to a new food or explore an old food in a new way. Have them hold the food and talk about its texture, shape, and color. If there are cracks or lines in the food, ask them to trace the lines with their finger slowly. Have them smell the food. When they put it in their mouth, have them move it around with their tongue, noticing the taste before and after chewing.



**Check out these FREE  
Mindfulness Apps!**



# Mindfulness Strategies

## Mindfulness Ideas for Teens

- **Body Scan:** It's like a mental x-ray of your body!
  - Start in a comfortable position with your eyes closed and breathe slowly.
  - Pick a body part and notice any feelings such as pain, tightness, temperature, or pressure. Spend about 20 seconds noticing each part.
  - If you feel pain or discomfort, notice those feelings. Don't judge yourself for them. Just notice them and let them go.
  - Breathe. Keep breathing, and imagine the pain and tightness getting less with each breath.
  - Release. Slowly stop thinking about that body part and move to the next one. Some people like to imagine letting go of one body part as they breathe out and moving on to the next as they breathe in. Go through your whole body in a way that feels right to you.
  - Notice when your thoughts wander. This will probably happen, so don't worry. Just gently bring your attention back to where you were scanning.
  - Imagine and breathe. Once you've scanned your body parts, imagine your awareness going all through your body. Breathe in and out slowly as you think about your whole body for a few seconds.
  - Come back. Slowly stop focusing on your body and bring your attention back to your surroundings.
- **Coloring:** Either draw something new or use a coloring book. Pay attention to the motion of the marker, the lines in the picture, and even how the marker feels on the paper.
- **Music:** Listen to a favorite song and pay close attention to every part of it, such as the words and the music. Try to hear the different instruments or the different tunes in the song.

## Mindful Parenting

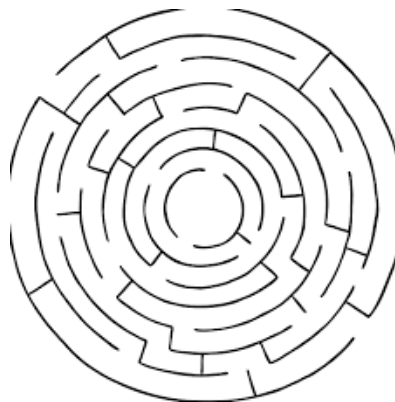
Parenting is tough, and sometimes our feelings of worry or frustration can make it harder to be the kind of parents we want to be. For example, if your child is crying because they don't want to get dressed in the morning and you're worried about being late for work, you may notice yourself getting more upset and having the urge to yell. Once you notice that urge, try the strategies below to slow down the moment to be more mindful so you can make a decision about how to respond in a way that you feel good about.

### 2 Feet, 1 Breath

- *Pause:* Before starting a task or activity, pause and take a moment to notice your surroundings.
- *Feel your feet:* Bring your attention to the feeling of your feet on the ground, noticing the sensations of your feet and the connection to the floor.
- *Take a breath:* After focusing on your feet, take one conscious, mindful breath, inhaling and exhaling slowly and deeply.
- *Repeat:* You can repeat this process throughout the day, whenever you feel overwhelmed or need to center yourself.

### C.O.A.L.

- *Curiosity:* Approaching experiences with a sense of wonder and a desire to learn, rather than judgment. "Why is my child acting this way?"
- *Openness:* Being receptive to thoughts, feelings, and experiences without resistance or trying to control them. Willing to consider your child's perspective.
- *Acceptance:* Acknowledging and embracing all aspects of oneself and others, including both positive and negative aspects, without judgment. Understanding your child's perspective.
- *Love:* Cultivating compassion and kindness towards oneself and others, fostering a sense of connection and well-being. Empathizing with your child.



**You can practice mindfulness right now!**  
Without judgment, drag your finger or pen through the maze noticing the twists, turns, and stops as you work to find the center.