

Five Sense Mindfulness

This mindfulness activity involves focusing your attention on each of your 5 senses one at a time. We will start today by allowing yourself to focus on each sense for 60 seconds. If your thoughts drift away from that sense, gently shift your awareness back to that sense. If you notice you are not focusing on the sense that you are intending to be aware of, you are actually being mindful in that moment! Notice that, then shift your mind back to the sense.

Focusing on senses is important because it is one way that you can decrease the intensity of an emotion. Taking in new information allows us to shift our focus and change the intensity of an emotion, and a helpful way to do this is by focusing on your senses.

Now for the next 60 seconds focus on everything you hear; the things inside you and outside you.

(Pause 30 seconds).

If you start to get distracted shift your awareness back to sounds.

(Pause 30 seconds).

Now for the next 60 seconds focus on your sense of smell. Focus on the smells in the room, pleasant or otherwise.

(Pause 60 seconds).

Shift your focus to your sense of taste. If you have a drink or a small candy to use, take a sip or a bite and notice everything about the taste. If you don't have that around, just notice what the taste inside your mouth is like.

(Pause 60 seconds).

Now notice your sense of touch. Notice the temperature of the room, your clothing touching your body, anything touching your body.

(Pause 30 seconds).

Notice where your feet are, and what part of your body is touching furniture or the floor.

(Pause 30 seconds).

Lastly, open your eyes and shift your focus to your sense of sight. Put your focus on an object in the room and notice everything about it; the colors, textures, and shapes. Observe and describe it as if you were going to ask someone who isn't looking at it to draw the object.

(Pause 60 seconds).

Now bring your focus back to the room.

What sense was easiest for you to focus on?

What sense was hardest for you to engage with?

When you are practicing this on your own, it is important to start with the sense that is easiest for you to participate in.

Some people prefer a modification of this where you count things you sense. For example, you may start with your sense of sound and notice 5 things you hear, then move on to vision and notice 4 things you see, then 3 things you touch, and so on.

This exercise is handy because you can do it anywhere without anyone around you noticing!