

**MINDFULNESS**

**It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much. This can be particularly true during busy times such as the Christmas season.**

Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and understand ourselves better. You can take steps to develop it in your own life. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

Mindfulness also allows us to become more aware of the stream of thoughts and feelings that we experience, and to see how we can become entangled in that stream in ways that are not helpful. Mindfulness can help us deal with issues more productively. We can ask: "Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just getting caught up in my thoughts?"

## How to be more mindful - Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness.

### Notice the everyday - As we go about our daily lives, we can notice the sensations of things, the food we eat, the air moving past the body as we walk.

### Keep it regular - It can be helpful to pick a regular time, such as a morning journey to work or a walk at lunchtime, during which you decide to be aware of the sensations created by the world around you.

### Try something new - Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat in meetings or going somewhere new for lunch, can also help you notice the world in a new way.

### Watch your thoughts - Some people find it very difficult to practise mindfulness. As soon as they stop what they're doing, lots of thoughts and worries crowd in. It might be useful to remember that mindfulness isn't about making these thoughts go away, but rather about seeing them as mental events that come and go. This can be very hard at first, but with gentle persistence it is possible.

Some people find that it is easier to cope with an over-busy mind if they are doing gentle yoga or walking.

### Name thoughts and feelings - To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them: "Here's the thought that I might fail that exam" or: "This is anxiety".

### Free yourself from the past and future - You can practise mindfulness anywhere, but it can be especially helpful to take a mindful approach if you realise that, for several minutes, you have been trapped in reliving past problems or pre-living future worries.

For further information on mindfulness and mindfulness practices visit www.nhs.uk

Information taken from [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

*If you would like further information about the Bridge Cottage Surgery Patient Participation Group please email ppgbridgecottage@gmail.com*