

MAKING MINDFULNESS A PRACTICAL REALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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All mindfulness practices begin with both feet on the floor and an upright spine. Sitting in a dignified, alert, upright position. Lying on the floor with a straight spine is a good alternative if it's a struggle to sit up.

Mindful Nation Ireland has offered us a short practice called 'Sos' that can bookend Irish classes before and after break, beautifully. <https://twitter.com/rtejr/status/1263801789750468609>

MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY:

Hand Clapping: Bring hands up, palms facing each other, as if you were holding a ball. Tell the class that you are going to count down 3-2-1 and then all clap hands together three times on 1-2-3; clap-clap-clap. Return your hands to the "holding a ball position". Notice what sensations are here; tingling, pins and needles, warmth. See if you can narrow your focus to just the little finger; what sensations are here? Bouncing over to the thumb. (From here you can explore anything, right ribs, left elbow, big toe. We're essentially training them how to focus attention on the body) Ending with feeling the breath, opening the eyes.

Feet Stomping: Feet on the ground. Stomp feet on the floor, counting down 3-2-1. Stop. Feel the sensations in your feet. Tingling, burning, warmth of the socks, maybe an absence of sensation. Can you feel the texture of your socks, heaviness of your shoes, does your weight rest in the heel or side of your foot? Exploring sensory experience, then ending with focus on the breath, opening the eyes.

Five Finger Breathing: Hold your less dominant hand in front of you. Take the dominant index finger and trace up the thumb on the in breath and down the thumb on the out breath. Continue through all fingers. 3-5 rounds. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67JDaNcX3gE>

Box (or Square) Breathing: Place the index finger in front of you or on the desk. Trace a straight line across on the inbreath. Hold breath as you trace down the right side of the box. Exhale as you trace across the bottom of the box. Hold breath as you trace up the left side of the box. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF_1ZiFta-E

Petal Breath: Start with an open palm facing up. Inhale and bring the finger tips together like a rosebud. Exhale and open the petals of the flower. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JDO0hQlvqs>

MINDFULNESS OF THE BREATH:

Just Three Breaths: Feet on the floor, send a full breath down into the belly and exhale all the way to empty. Do this 3 times.

Balloon Breath: Imagine filling your tummy like a balloon. You can fill it with worries and then blow the balloon far far away like blowing out a candle. This is fun to do lying on the back with a rubber ducky or a teddy on the tummy.

7/11 Breath: Breathe in to the count of 7 and breathe out to the count of 11. If you begin to run out of breath on the exhale count faster. Make the numbers fit the breath rather than the other way around.

MINDFULNESS WITH SOUND:

Bee Breath: Seated upright, breath in normally. As you breathe out keep your lips together and hum like a bee. Repeat. Regular inbreath, humming on the outbreath.

Inner Silence: Sitting quietly, feeling the breath in the body. Bring your awareness to sounds, beginning with sounds that are near, or in the room. (maybe you can hear your breath, ticking of a clock, radiator bubbling etc..) After a few moments, opening to sounds from far away. Maybe mechanical sounds like cars, or natural sounds like birds. Not looking for sounds, but sitting quietly and receiving sounds into your ears. Noticing how they arrive and disappear again, in the same way that the breath arrives and disappears again and thoughts arrive and then go again.

MINDFULNESS OF VISION:

Colour Breathing: Choose your favourite colour today. Imagining breathing the colour into your entire body, all the way to your toes and then breathing it out to fill the room with all of that beautiful colour.

CHILDREN’S MINDFULNESS RESOURCES:

Mindful Moments for Children Podcast + Books - Niall Breslin (Bressie)
Sitting Still like a Frog – Elaine Snell

ADULT MINDFULNESS RESOURCES:

<https://michelevanvaley.com/blog/>

25 min **Body Scan**

4 min **Three Step Breathing Space**

Three Steps:

1. Awareness. What is here right now; thoughts, sensations coming from the body, emotions
2. Gathering. Narrowing the aperture to focus on the feeling of breathing
3. Expanding. Noticing the whole body again, including the breath and expanding awareness to include the space you are in.

Just Like Me: Pema Chodron. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN6hTFfgd0>

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course

Quaker Meeting Hall Lower Churchtown Road, Dublin

In Person, Oct 22nd to Dec 10th

<https://michelevanvaley.com/classes/mindfulness-based-stress-reduction-mbsr-8-week-course/#scroll>

Mindfulness.ie for more courses, including online offerings.

Neurodiversity Ireland

Inclusive Educator Awards submission deadline September 29th

<https://www.neurodiversityireland.com/inclusive-educator-awards>

Dr Pauline Cogan and Michele Van Valey speaking about Neurodiversity with Clare McKenna on Newstalk

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/how-we-treat-neurodiversity-in-schools-medical-exercise/id1462259645?i=1000576739555>

Mindfulness in Schools Project

Paws b 7-11 year olds

<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/teach-paws-b/>

.b 11-17 year olds

<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/teach-dot-b/>

"Finding Peace in the Frantic World" by Mark Williams

You can buy the book and follow along with the meditations on Soundcloud. Also, I can facilitate this course online for staff/parents

More information on Mark's work here

<https://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/finding-peace-in-a-frantic-world/>

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