



# *Art and Healing:* Mindfulness Moments

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## Mindfulness

*Have you ever noticed when you are drawing or making something that time flies by?*

Sometimes, the process of creating can be enjoyable all on its own, rather than thinking about the finished result. This is what creative mindfulness is all about. It can be healing and contribute to overall wellness. Doing creative activities can focus us and take away the feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious.

Mindfulness means paying attention to yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, and what is going on around you, so that you can be in the present moment. Being in the present moment means that your mind focuses on what is going on right now, rather than thinking about what happened yesterday or what you are going to do this weekend. Being mindful helps you to focus and concentrate. It can help you notice if you are worried or distracted, and allow you to let those thoughts go. It can also help you relax.

We are so used to so much going on in our minds that being mindful takes concentration, and you will notice your thoughts drifting when you practice mindfulness. When this happens, acknowledge the thoughts you are having – try to imagine that you are observing them – realize that these are just thoughts, and put them aside. Use the creative activity you are doing as an anchor to bring you back into the present moment.

Before doing a creative mindfulness activity, try to relax and clear your mind with one of these short mindful warmups. You can try these at any time to help calm yourself, to focus, or to have a quiet moment.

# Mindfulness Warmups

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## Awareness Scan

- Take a comfortable seat, and notice your thoughts right now. Put these thoughts aside for now.
- Take a deep breath, and pay attention to your body, giving awareness to your toes and moving slowly up to the top of your head. Squeeze all your muscles, stretch your arms, wiggle your fingers, and relax. Sit in an upright and relaxing posture.
- Take a deep breath, and take in everything around you.
- Notice:
  - ◇ One thing you can hear
  - ◇ One thing you can see
  - ◇ One thing you can taste
  - ◇ One thing you can feel

## Square Breathing

- Stretch and then relax.
- Take a comfortable seat and sit upright.
- Imagine your breath is following the shape of a square.
- Inhale for 4 seconds as you draw a line in your mind across the top of the square.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds as you draw a line down the right side of the square.
- Exhale for 4 seconds as you draw a line across the bottom of the square.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds as you draw a line up the left side of the square.
- Repeat 3 times.