



**Gloucestershire Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Introduction to mindfulness for persistent pain**

# **Introduction**

Do you feel that you are in a daily battle with your pain?  
Is your mind full of thoughts, fears, frustrations or muddle?

Do you feel like you are always rushing?

Does your mind and body feel disconnected?

Mindfulness can help you find a calmer way to live life despite having pain.

## **What is mindfulness?**

Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally. It is based on meditation practice which helps you to:

- allow your mind to settle more in the present moment
- accept what is here, for better or worse
- let go of fruitless and exhausting struggles
- focus your energy on the things that you can change
- help you notice pleasant experiences

## **What mindfulness is not:**

Mindfulness is not very easy to explain, and sometimes the best way to understand it is to try it.

It is also important to be clear that mindfulness is not a cure for pain and does not remove uncomfortable situations from our lives, but helps us relate to them in a different way.

Mindfulness is not relaxation. Some people can find mindfulness calming and feel more settled but this is a helpful by-product rather than the aim of it.

Mindfulness meditation has been used for thousands of years in different places and cultures. The benefits of meditation practice for health and wellbeing have been researched, and non-religious versions of the mindfulness approach is widely offered by the NHS as part of wellbeing.

## **Gloucestershire and Herefordshire NHS Mindfulness Course**

The Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Self-Management Service offers an NHS course specifically tailored for people with persistent pain. The team involved with the course are qualified and experienced mindfulness teachers.

The course involves attending 8 weekly online sessions (so requires a laptop/tablet/phone to participate), in a group setting and daily meditation practices to do at home. Each session is pre-planned. Probably the most important part of the course is doing some home practice each day which will take around 20 minutes, so it is worth thinking about whether you will have the time and motivation to do this before enrolling on the course.

The course is based on the Breathworks 'Mindfulness for Health' book by Burch and Penman which is available from most book retailers or via County Council libraries.

## **Comments from previous attendees on our Mindfulness Course:**

“Mindfulness has brought me a peace and contentment with my situation that I have not experienced for many years.”

"I was fairly sceptical as to its usefulness for me and my pain and to what level it might help me. After a few weeks and investing the time, I found it truly helpful in changing my attitude to my sensation."

## **How do you learn to be more mindful?**

Learning to be more mindful requires a little bit of teaching and a lot of practice. Many people find attending a course helps them to understand mindfulness more and start practising meditation regularly. So it can help you work out if this is something helpful for you if you haven't meditated before.

The following websites have online courses although there may be a charge.

### **Be mindful**

Website: [www.bemindfulonline.com](http://www.bemindfulonline.com)

### **Breathworks**

Website: [www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/methods-for-living-well-with-pain-and-illness](http://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/methods-for-living-well-with-pain-and-illness)

Or you could ask in your local library for help to find courses in your area.

There are also mindfulness courses run at St Michael's Hospice in Herefordshire, that can support people with health and stress problems. There is a small charge for these courses. <https://www.st-michaels-hospice.org.uk/mindfulness/>

## **Recommended mindfulness resources**

If you would like to find out more about mindfulness, there are some good resources available. Here are a few we recommend:

### **Online videos**

- An introduction to mindfulness (Mindfulnet.org, 3 mins)  
Website: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbizmVKHdgs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbizmVKHdgs)
- 'About mindfulness' - (Dumfries & Galloway's, 7 mins)  
Website:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=IPuTqDI99qM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=IPuTqDI99qM)
- BBC News (David Sillito, 3 mins)  
Website: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-16406814/scans-show-mindfulness-meditation-brain-boost](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-16406814/scans-show-mindfulness-meditation-brain-boost)
- All it takes is 10 mindful minutes (Andy Puddicombe, 9 mins)  
Website:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzR62JJCMBQ&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzR62JJCMBQ&feature=em-share_video_user)

## Books

- 'Mindfulness for Health' by Vidyamala Burch and Danny Penman
- 'Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World' by Mark Williams and Danny Penman

## Websites

### Headspace

Website: [www.headspace.com/science](http://www.headspace.com/science)

### Breathworks

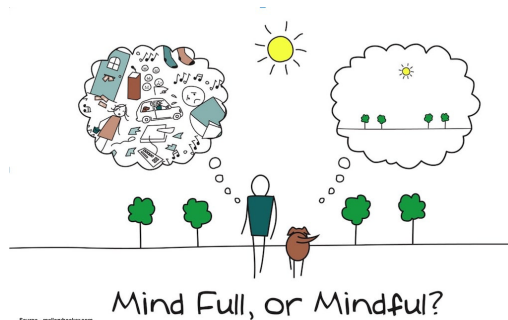
Website: <http://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/what-is-mindfulness>

### The Free Mindfulness Project

Website: [www.freemindfulness.org/](http://www.freemindfulness.org/)

### Tara Brach

Website: [www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/](http://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/)



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## Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

### Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

**\*Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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