

UNIT 2

Be Mindful

Are you feeling stressed or overwhelmed? Need to catch your breath in the midst of a lot of change? Feeling like time just flies by? As a first year college student, you are not alone in feeling these ways.

Big Changes in Life Can Often Be Overwhelming.

Your rhythms of studying, working, resting, eating, and everything else may be shifting. It's normal for your attention to get distracted at these times. Perhaps you're thinking about the past or what life was like before starting college? Or about the future, eagerly anticipating or worrying about what's coming next?



In the Students' Words, These Tools Can Help You To:

Take a pause when you're overwhelmed

Become aware of the present moment

Connect with how you're feeling and your surroundings

Enjoy your life rather than just being on autopilot

Science Tells Us That

Read over the descriptions of the three "Be Mindful" tools on the following pages. Select 1-2 that are of greatest interest to you. Then, a few times this week, listen to the audio or watch the video guide and practice along. After you practice, complete the Reflections page.

Getting Started

You might feel skeptical about some of these tools, wondering how something so simple or brief could have benefits for you. The good news is that these tools were selected with students in mind, are guided by science, and don't require you to do anything different than your usual daily activities. You're already doing daily activities like eating, spending a lot of time sitting in chairs, and breathing. These tools guide you in doing those same things mindfully.

The more regularly you practice, the more likely you will be to see benefit.



TOOL 1

Mindfulness of Daily Activities

Paying attention to things you do every day is a great way to start, especially activities that we often do on autopilot. For most of us, eating is one of these things. Many of us eat on the go, while doing homework or watching tv, checking our phones, and other activities that pull attention away from actually experiencing our food. Even though the ability to go on autopilot can be useful—like when you need to unlock your phone—it's helpful that you don't have to recall your passcode with effort each time. Being on autopilot also can be a problem, like when you miss out on some really great experiences or some important information because your mind was somewhere else. Mindfulness is an alternative to autopilot.

Mindfulness is an Alternative to Autopilot.

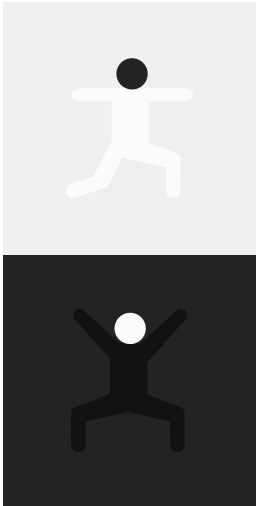
The concept of eating mindfully may be new to you (or even sound a bit strange). The invitation is to give it a try. Even just for a few moments, see what you find by slowing down and paying attention to flavors, textures, aromas, and more. After you've practiced eating mindfully a few times, we've listed some other daily activities. If you like, give these a try this week too, and see what you discover!



In the Look & Listen Section of the Wellness Tools Page, Launch the Audio Guide For Eating Mindfully.

Stretching Mindfully

You likely have been doing a lot of sitting. Whether you are sitting in a classroom, or sitting on Zoom, there is likely to be a lot of sitting this semester. It's easy to lose awareness of how y





Step 1: Awareness

In this step, you're invited to pay attention to what is in your awareness right now. Perhaps asking yourself: What thoughts are present? What emotions are present? What physical sensations are here right now?

For Thoughts

It can be helpful to imagine thoughts like leaves on a stream. Or imagine yourself watching your thoughts go by like scenes in a movie. You can explore using these images to notice your thoughts.

For Emotions

It can be helpful to name them if they are coming up. Common emotions are joy or happiness, anger or frustration, sadness or feeling down, and fear or being overwhelmed. You can explore using these terms or others to label what you feel.

For Sensations

You might take a sensory survey of: the weight of clothing against your skin, the firmness or softness of the surface underneath you, the presence of tension or stiffness, or the temperature of the air around you. You can explore using this survey of senses.

Whatever you notice is OK.





Are you interested in building one of these practices in your daily life? If so, when?