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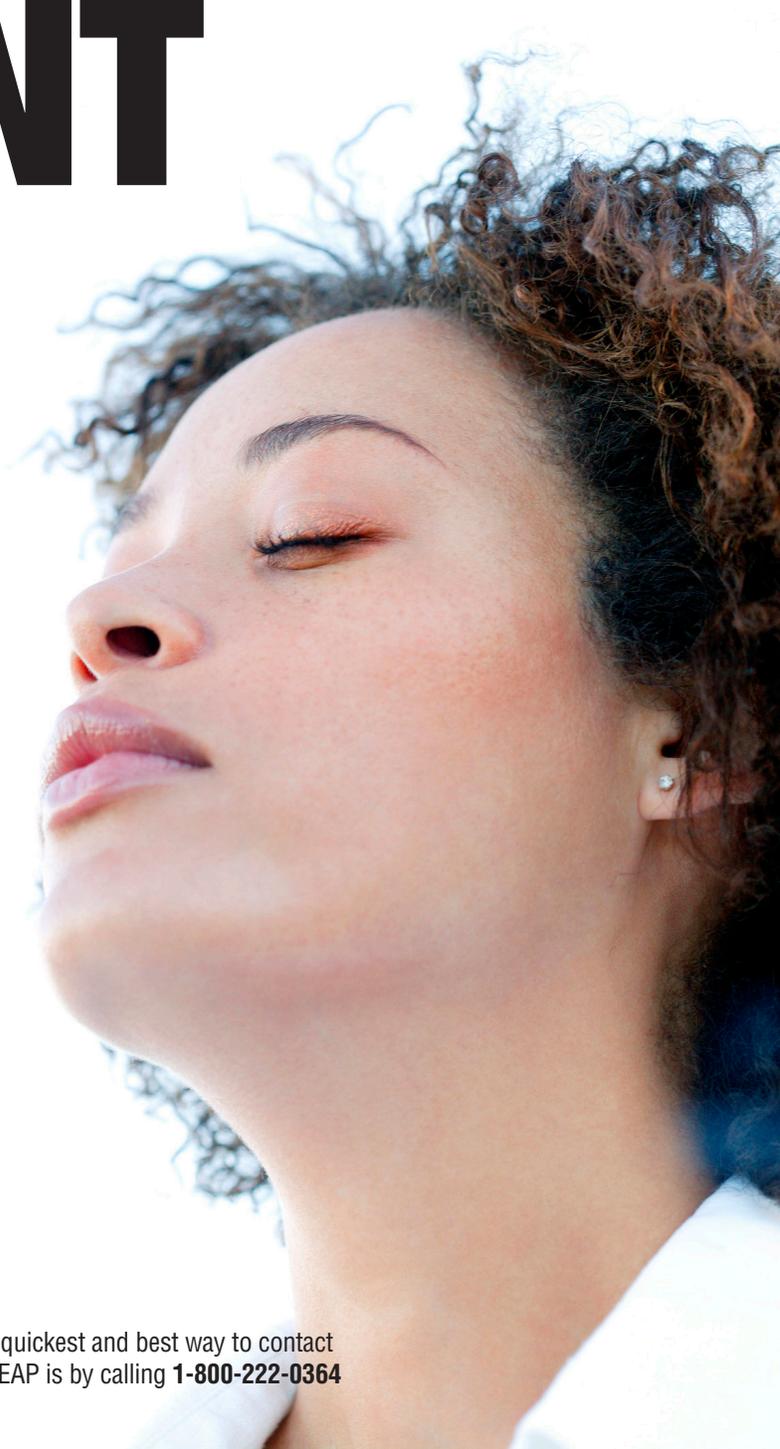
BE IN THE MOMENT

THE VALUE OF MINDFULNESS

Each day provides many opportunities to practice mindful awareness. Mindfulness is about paying close attention to what is happening in the moment. It is similar to what occurs when an artist, musician, or athlete is absorbed in what he or she is doing. Mindfulness — especially mindfulness meditation — has been shown to help people:

- Handle stress better
- Be less reactive
- Cope better with depression and anxiety
- Sleep more soundly

Researchers are even exploring how mindfulness-based stress reduction can help people with gastrointestinal disorders such as irritable bowel disorder and ulcerative colitis.



PSC

EAP

The quickest and best way to contact
the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**



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Slowing down

The first step to being mindful is slowing down. When you slow down, you can become more aware of the details of the moment. Many of us have had the experience of trying to read a billboard, but because of the speed we were going, we passed it too quickly to read the full message. Our hectic lives can pose similar problems — for example, rushing out the door when someone is trying to tell you something that is important to him or her — and probably to you. Remembering to breathe slowly helps, too. It is a natural way to relax the body and the mind.

Seven Ways to a Mindful Day

We have many opportunities to put mindfulness into practice throughout our day. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Wake up to mindfulness

Your mindful day starts when you wake up. Start slow and become aware of your breathing. Then, notice which of your nostrils is more open than the other. This may sound strange, but — like observing your breath — it is part of the process of becoming more aware and sensitive to what is happening in a given moment.

What you are looking for in your mindful practice are some simple techniques for anchoring you to the moment. This keeps you from being carried away by your thoughts. Being aware of when you inhale and exhale is a classic way of coming into the moment.

Break your fast mindfully

No matter what breakfast is — a piece of fruit, an energy bar, or coffee and a muffin — take your time with your first meal of the day. Take it slow and, like your breath, observe your experience of eating. The feel, the smell, the taste — pay attention to each bite.

Mindfulness for every connection

Be mindful and give everyone your full attention when you interact with others. This may require you to put down your electronic device momentarily, which in turn may allow you to slow down and breathe more deeply. This can help you focus so that you can be present with those around you.

Practice mindfulness during your breaks

Breaks are a wonderful time to practice mindfulness. Start by slowing your breathing and following your breath as you inhale and exhale. Become absorbed in the moment and in your breathing. As you practice mindful awareness more frequently, getting into a mindful state will begin to happen more easily and quickly. Being mindful for even five to 10 minutes can help you come back to your desk refreshed and energized.

In the moment

You can also practice mindfulness when you are engaged in activity. Slow your breathing and gently relax the body and mind even when you are working on an important task. Slowing down and being in the moment may bring you unexpected insights and clarity, which may make your task easier.

Share mindfulness

When you leave the office, share mindfulness with those in your life by being a model of how mindfulness looks. Be present with those you talk to — lessening or avoiding the usual distractions like television, computer, and phones can make this easier. Spend quality time interacting and savor those moments in the same way that you appreciate food during mindful eating.

Prepare for sleep

Being mindful can help you begin to slow down and relax for some quality sleep. Have a set routine and perhaps include a breathing or relaxation technique to help you unwind more effectively. Be aware and present as you allow your body and mind to slow down and become more relaxed.

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to you and your family at no cost.

Employee Assistance Program

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HOURS A DAY

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