



mindful hub

well-being, right now.

Practicing Yoga Mindfully

Think when you practice yoga you're practicing mindfulness too? Well, it depends. Here are some tips for integrating mindfulness into your yoga practice.

Set an intention at the start of your practice: Being mindful means, in part, being intentional. That means that we're not floating around, at the whim of everything around us. When you land on your mat, take a deep breath and decide your intention for your practice. Less about what you want to "get out of it" and more about what you wish to "put into it," intentions can be as basic as "I wish to breathe deeply today" to as intense as "I wish to release the pain in my heart." Whatever it is, take a moment to set one.

Leave your electronics at the door: Things like your Smartphone and watch can stay outside the studio. Your phone calls, texts, emails and sense of exactly what time it is can return once you're done with practice. Take this time to disconnect from outside influences and connect to yourself.

Make space for others when practicing in the studio: Rushing the studio door to get your favorite spot, spreading your props all around you so others find it difficult to find a space all exhibit a selfishness that has little to do with mindfulness. Being considerate and compassionate towards others is part of mindfulness. One of my dearest friends once said when teaching a class, "Please make room for those coming in a little late. Some day, that may be you." Ain't that the truth!

Practice from where you are, not from where you want to be: This is a tricky one. Yoga is exercise. Many of us practice in part, because we want to stay fit and look good. But how does this fit in a practice that's supposed to be about acceptance? Try to practice in a way that fits where you are right now. If that means modifying a pose, do it. If that means resting a lot, do it. **Having faith that things will shift with discipline and commitment is one way to include a mindful mindset.** Going crazy trying to do every advanced variation of every pose is not mindful practice. Nor is pushing through pain.

Practice compassion while on the mat: It's easy to let our mind pick up on what we don't do "right" when we practice and compare our bodies to those around us and start to feel badly about ourselves or jealous of others. It's hard to be compassionate towards ourselves, no matter what degree of complexity we bring to the practice. Yoga is primarily about the breath and controlling your wandering mind and less about what you do with your arms and legs. Bring more compassion and less judgment to your mat and you'll be giving yourself a healthy dose of mindfulness!

To get started with a mindfulness practice, visit mindfulhub.com.

We wish you 20 minutes of mindfulness each day!

By contributing writer, Karen Fabian, Certified Baptiste Yoga teacher, Founder, bare bones yoga, www.barebonesyoga.com.