



## Bringing Mindfulness to the busy Autumn Season

With the coming of the fall, we typically shift from summer vacation mode to the productive focus of back-to-school and working full force with little vacation time. While this can be an exciting phase of new opportunities and renewed energy, it can bring with it increased pressures and anxiety. Staying mindful as your plans unfold will keep your healthy **and more productive**.

**Take time to set concrete goals:** The fall can feel like the start of a new year, a time when we set resolutions. **Resist the urge to set vague and unrealistic goals.** Include specifics that identify the steps to get to your desired end goal. One of the central tenets of a classic time management book by Stephen Covey called, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," states, "Begin with the end in mind." This idea refers to seeing in your mind's eye the outcome you desire. **Don't forget that meditation is an important part of mindful project planning.** Take time to meditate on your goal and see it happen.

**Be realistic about time management:** Children today are at an ever-increasing risk of being overbooked, between school, after-school activity and sports. Adults can also fall into the same trap as they work, take on projects and try to maintain an active family and social life. **Be aware of events and invitations you agree to attend, where there is little reward or a growth opportunity for you.** Be picky about the use of your time. **As much as possible, cut out or modify activities that are draining or bring no joy.**

**Schedule time to exercise regularly:** As we get busier, we run the risk of being more exhausted at the end of each day. Also, as the days get shorter and daylight savings time begins, it gets darker earlier. Both of these scenarios can tempt you to give up exercise and crash in front of the television at night. Make time to exercise and **be creative with options to keep you engaged.** This might include inviting a friend to yoga class, training for a road race or looking for a new work out option or location to keep you energized.

**Use yoga as a tool with children:** As kids return to school, they are managing a slew of emotions and daily challenges. Yoga is a wonderful tool that they can use to develop strength as well as decrease stress. Many schools have yoga classes for children but if not, use free family time to try some poses. Do deep breathing exercises with children. **Ask them how they feel after a 15-minute yoga session.** Give them poses that they can use during the day and techniques to manage their stress and anxiety.

**Look for signs of stress:** Often, when we are focused on being productive, we miss signs of stress. **These can start with changes in sleep patterns,** nutrition and develop into irritability and frustration with daily activities.

**Children can become withdrawn, spend more time in front of the computer or television and decline invitations from other kids.** Be aware of these signs and take time to rest, eat healthy and review your schedule and that of your children to see if adjustments need to be made.

**Make time to acknowledge and reward, especially with children:** No matter what age, it's important that **we take the time to acknowledge ourselves and the hard work we do each day.** With children, schools are focused on concrete results and grades and scores are used as a feedback mechanism. **This doesn't take into account the challenges that children face around social situations, expressing themselves, being truthful, standing up for their beliefs and trying new things.** Take time to acknowledge both yourself and your kids for a job well done. It could be a card or a dinner out or even just telling them (or yourself), "You are doing great and I notice!"

For more information on mindfulness for children and families, visit [mindfulhub.com](http://mindfulhub.com)

*We wish you 20 minutes of mindfulness each day!*

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