

Developing Mindfulness Cues



Did you know you can use the stimuli of daily life as cues to weave more mindfulness into your day?

While having set mindfulness practices (like morning meditation) is beneficial, mindfulness cues are another option to either get started with, or fill in the gaps between your other mindfulness activities.

“Mindfulness is a habit, it’s something the more one does, the more likely one is to be in that mode with less and less effort... it’s a skill that can be learned. It’s accessing something we already have. Mindfulness isn’t difficult. What’s difficult is to remember to be mindful.” ~ John Teasdale

Mindfulness cues are easy and spontaneous, and are designed to snap you out of the unconscious “autopilot” state of mind and bring you back into the present moment.

Our mind develops habits that are triggered by cues. When you hear the “new text” sound, you grab your phone to find out what's happening. When you get ready for bed you brush your teeth.

Once you start noticing these cues, you can give them a new meaning. Choose something in your environment that you will use as a trigger to remind you to bring your mind back to the present. You may simply decide to just bring awareness to your breath when your cues come up, or you can assign various mindfulness responses to particular cues.

Here are some examples of mindfulness cues to get you started. Feel free to come up with your own that suit your daily life:

Cue	Practice
Going on a familiar walk	Discover three new things you haven’t noticed before
Waiting in line at the grocery store	Take a mindful minute to simply observe your surroundings without judgement

Washing your hands	Put all awareness into the sensation of your hands, the lather and the water
Waiting at a traffic intersection	Take three slow, deep breaths
Eating Dinner	Consciously slow your down and be mindful of each bite. Chew your food fully and notice the taste, texture and colours of your food.
Making tea	Bring a gentle awareness to your thoughts without attachment to them.