

## Getting Started



You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day  
– unless you're too busy -  
then you should sit for an hour.  
- *Old Zen adage* -

When you sit,  
sit in such a way that you feel you have already arrived.  
To sit doesn't mean to struggle.  
When you sit,  
sit so that sitting becomes an arrival into the present moment.  
Enjoy your arrival.  
How wonderful to have arrived.  
- *Thich Nhat Hanh* -

After experiencing the [Introduction](#), if you've decided to continue with the course, here's what you need to do next:

**Step 1: Let Us Know You are Beginning**

**Step 2: Complete the Goals & Commitment Worksheet**

**Step 3: Familiarize Yourself with "Frequently Asked Questions"**

**Step 4: Create a Manual for Your Journey (Optional)**

**Step 5: Take Care of Your Own Physical and Mental Health**

# Getting Started

## ☐ Step 1: Let Us Know You are Beginning

We're glad you've decided to start the program!

If you'd like to receive a [Certificate of Completion](#) – for school, work, or personal motivation – **you need to fill out the [Getting Started Questionnaire](#) before starting with Week 1.** The Questionnaire asks for your name and email so we can send you our **Welcome Letter**. Your information is never shared. The Questionnaire also asks if there is a date by which you need to receive your certificate. **It takes a minimum of 10 weeks from the day you send in this questionnaire to complete the course and receive a certificate, so if you need the certificate by a certain date, take this into account.**

Completing the questionnaire shows that you have begun the course and makes you a member of the [Palouse Mindfulness Community](#). As a member, you have the option to join our Facebook or Zoom groups where Palouse students and graduates meditate together and discuss mindfulness topics.

You can still take the course without completing the Getting Started Questionnaire – you just won't be able to connect with other students online, nor would you be eligible to receive a certificate. Please choose the option that feels best for you.

*If you have any difficulties with the questionnaire, or **if you don't receive your Welcome Letter within 10 minutes of completing the questionnaire**, email us at [team@palousemindfulness.com](mailto:team@palousemindfulness.com) with the subject line "Questionnaire help," and we'll be happy to assist you.*

## ☐ Step 2: Complete the Goals & Commitment Worksheet

It's important to consider what it is that you hope will happen as a result of doing this program. For example, you may hope for some effective ways of dealing with stress or worry, ways to cope with illness or difficult life situations, better concentration, an increase in the ability to be present and fully engaged in life, or to accept yourself more fully and others just as they are.

### What is it that you hope will happen as a result of following this program?

The **Goals & Commitment Worksheet** will help you answer this question and will create the foundation for your practice over the next eight weeks. ***This worksheet is for your own use, there is no need to send it to us.***

Please complete the worksheet on the next page now.

Take your time completing it. This is especially important because it is difficult to begin a meditation practice on your own, and you will greatly increase your odds of staying with it if you are clear about your goals and when and where you will do the practices.

### A Note About the Time Commitment

This course takes about **50 hours over eight or more weeks**. Each "week" includes:

- About **2 hours** of videos and reading. You can watch/read all at once or spread it out—whatever works for you.
- About **30–35 minutes of formal practice per day**.
- Informal practices to integrate mindfulness into everyday life.

## Goals & Commitment Worksheet

This worksheet begins your MBSR journey. Actually writing your responses to these questions and those on the practice logs will help ground your practice and learnings in a way that would not be possible if you simply answered these questions in your head. In a way, this is the first mindfulness practice: being mindful of your intentions and commitment to the process you are about to begin. **NOTE: As you go through the course, you may take longer than a week for any given "week", and that's fine. Knowing how much time you need is, in itself, mindfulness.**

So, first, there is probably something that drew you to this program that made it seem like a good idea. For example, you may wake up in the middle of the night with worries and concerns that keep you from getting a good night's sleep, or you may be dealing with difficult health issues, or you may have trouble concentrating, or you may simply want to increase your ability to be present and fully engaged in life, to accept more fully yourself/others, just as you/they are.

**By the end of the course, I am hoping that:**

While there are things you hope that will get better, it is important to recognize positive aspects of yourself, because it is these things that form the basis for any self-improvement. We tend to take for granted our own core strengths, so give yourself a few minutes to reflect on this. For instance, what would a good friend or close family member say that they appreciate about you?

**Some of my strengths are:**

Finding a specific time and place for your half-hour of daily practice is likely to be one of the most difficult hurdles and writing down now when and where you'll be doing your daily practice will help you to keep your promise to yourself to practice each day. People often choose to practice first thing in the morning, before roommates or family members are up and about, and others like the evening shortly before bedtime, or just after arriving home from work. Precisely when you practice is less important than having a set time and place, a time that you know you can practice without having to attend to the telephone or be responsive to others, and a place that is quiet and separate from others.

**When will I practice?** (Try to be concrete, e.g., 6:30am M-F, 7:30am Sat/Sun):

**Where I am planning to practice** (e.g., corner of the bedroom, basement, etc.):

The readings and videos for each "week" take about 2 hours. You are more likely to do the assigned readings and videos if you choose a particular day of the week and time to do this. If you don't do these all at once, it's fine to spread out the videos and reading over a period of several days.

**The times and day(s) of the week I will do the videos and readings:**

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** By continuing with this course, I am confirming that if things come up which are too difficult to handle, I will take a break from the course and/or seek the help of a good counselor or therapist (see *If You React Strongly* at [palousemindfulness.com/strongfeelings](https://palousemindfulness.com/strongfeelings)). If I need immediate help, I will call one of the crisis lines given in [palousemindfulness.com/911](https://palousemindfulness.com/911). I agree to assume full responsibility for any risks, injuries, or damage which I might incur as a result of participating in this course and waive any claim I may have against Palouse Mindfulness or its representatives.

## Getting Started (cont'd)

The “weeks” follow the traditional MBSR format, but you can go at your own pace. Just **avoid rushing – don’t complete a “week” in less than seven days**. Once you’ve completed at least six days of formal practice for the “week” (these don’t have to be consecutive) and feel you’ve absorbed the key ideas, you’re ready to move on. If life interrupts and you miss a few days, no worries. You can pick up right where you left off – or review earlier material if that’s helpful.

### ☐ Step 3: Familiarize Yourself with "Frequently Asked Questions"

You don't have to study the [FAQ page](#), but do take a look at it so you can see what's there. This is where the most common questions and concerns about the course and the practices are addressed. For instance, one of the most common questions is: [If I have experience, can I go faster and finish in less than eight weeks?](#)

### ☐ Step 4: Create a Manual for Your Journey (Optional)

We suggest keeping a binder with course materials for reference and review. If you print the instructions and readings for each week, you'll have created your own MBSR manual by the end

Visit the [MBSR Manual page](#) for directions about how to do this

### ☐ Step 5: Take Care of Your Own Physical and Mental Health

Feel free to modify any of the practices, especially yoga, to suit your physical needs. *Being aware of your own limits, and modifying the practices when necessary is, in itself, mindfulness in action.*

Difficult feelings or memories may arise during the course. If you have a counselor or doctor, let them know you're doing this program and update them on your progress so they can support you if needed.

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** *By continuing with this course, you are confirming that if things come up which are too difficult to handle, you will take a break from the course and seek the help of a good counselor or therapist (see [If You React Strongly](#) for guidance about whether to take a break or not). If you should need immediate help, call one of the crisis lines given in [Crisis Hotlines](#). You agree to assume full responsibility for any risks, injuries, or damages which might occur as a result of participating in this course and waive any claim you may have against Palouse Mindfulness or its representatives.*

### One last note:

Although this is a self-paced course, **you don’t have to do it alone**. As you go through the course, there are two ways to interact with other students and graduates, both optional:

- [Weekly Zoom Meditation & Discussion Meetings](#)

After a short introduction, there is a live group meditation followed by time to share in real-time with others. One of your six weekly practices can include participation in these live meditations.

- [Palouse Mindfulness Facebook Group](#)

You can ask questions and interact with other students and graduates. Most questions are answered within an hour or two. Joining is optional, and you’re welcome to just observe without posting.

*You're ready to start!*

*Go to [Week 1](#) to begin your journey!*