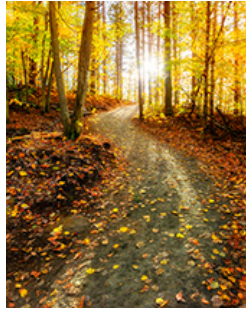


Introduction



In my walks, I would fain return to my senses.
What business have I in the woods
if I am thinking of something out of the woods?
- Henry David Thoreau -

"Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment." - Jon Kabat-Zinn

For most of us, when this happens, it's unexpected, maybe while walking on a mountain trail on a crisp autumn day, or being so focused in work or play that you are not thinking about past or future, or connecting with someone in a way that makes it seem like time is standing still. This state of being alive and whole in the present moment is always available, but it typically eludes us, especially in times of difficulty and external pressures.

"Mindfulness" is used in many contexts nowadays and there are many different understandings of the term. Diana Winston of UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center gives my favorite definition: ***Paying attention to present moment experience with open curiosity and a willingness to be with what is.***

*The **Palouse Mindfulness course** is a blend of meditation, body awareness, and mindful movement: learning through practice and study how your body handles (and can resolve) stress neurologically.*

What will taking the Palouse Mindfulness course do for me?

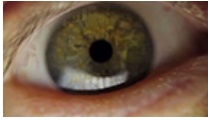
Through this course, you will learn skills that can increase your ability to:

- Cope with stress, pain, and the challenges of everyday life
- Deal with disturbing events with grace and composure
- Be fully present and alive in this moment

While the Palouse Mindfulness course is not a "cure" for serious medical conditions and should not be used as a substitute for medical treatment, research indicates that mindfulness training can have a significant therapeutic effect for those experiencing stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, depression, chronic pain, migraines, heart conditions, diabetes and other ailments. In addition, participants typically report feeling more alive, more "in-tune" with themselves and others.

Introduction

Introductory videos



[Mindfulness: Being Fully Awake in Our Own Lives](#) [10 min]

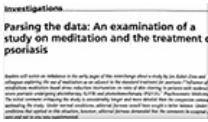
A good introduction to what we mean by mindfulness in the context of this course. It is narrated by Saki Santorelli, the former director of the Center for Mindfulness at the **University of Massachusetts Medical School**, where Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction began.



[Introduction to Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction \(MBSR\)](#) [7 min]

Describes how the MBSR course began over 40 years ago, narrated by Jon Kabat-Zinn and others who were instrumental in bringing MBSR to the world. Also see the two-page article, [Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: An Overview](#), a short but engaging article about the

essence of MBSR.



[The Beginnings of Mindfulness Research](#) [3 min]

A brief description of the commitment to research that began in the early days of MBSR. There is now a solid base of peer-reviewed research validating the benefits of mindfulness meditation for people coping with heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, chronic pain, depression, anxiety and other medical and psychological conditions. For recent research, including specific journal citations, see [Scientific Research](#).

If you want to know even more...

You don't really need to know more about mindfulness to get started with this course. However, if you are interested in digging deeper, you can watch an information-packed video of [Jon Kabat-Zinn speaking at Google](#) which explores the research validating mindfulness for physical and psychological well-being. For the full origin story of how Kabat-Zinn, an MIT PhD in molecular biology, came to create MBSR, read [The Power of Paying Attention](#).

The importance of practice

This course is highly experiential and the daily practice is perhaps the most important component. You wouldn't expect to learn to surf by reading a book about surfboards and waves, and learning a mindfulness practice is no different than any other skill that involves both mind and body. You know from your own experience in learning to play an instrument, or a sport, or any complex skill whatsoever, that practice is important. ***Your body/mind is the most complex instrument in the universe. It takes time and practice to use it effectively and harmoniously.***

For this reason, we recommend that you set aside time every day for practice. ***This may be the most difficult hurdle you face in getting started because one of the issues you are facing may be not having enough time for all that needs to get done in a day - how are you going to find extra time?*** Previous participants have said that after a few weeks of practice, although their time to "do things" is technically less, there can be a feeling of having more space and time, even in the middle of a very busy day.

If you are ready to continue now, please go to [Getting Started](#) before going on to Week 1.