

Getting Started

Before You Begin...

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 more fully yourself and others, just as you/they are. **What is it that you hope will happen as a result of following this program?**

The **Getting Started Worksheet** will help you answer this question and will create the foundation for your practice over the next eight weeks. **Please complete the worksheet now** (if you will be completing this by hand, print the **PDF version of the Worksheet**, but if you'd like to complete it on your computer, download the **WORD version**).

Take your time in doing this. 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 this if you are clear about your goals and when and where you will do the practices.*

Special Invitation: You are invited to join an online group designed to provide something that's been missing until recently: the ability to connect with other people taking the course. With this group, there will be an opportunity to share with others, and also to get questions answered by previous graduates of the course (and occasionally, me). If you would like to join the group, go to **Palouse Mindfulness Online Student Community** for more information. Before joining, you will need to have completed your **Getting Started Worksheet**.



Creating a Manual

We suggest that you keep a 3-ring binder with materials from the course for reference and review. By the time the course is over, if you print the instructions for each week as well each of the documents listed under "Reading" for that week, you will have created your own MBSR manual. If this is something you'd like to do, see **MBSR Manual** for suggestions about content and organization, as well as documents for the binder cover and table of contents.

Videos and Reading

For each week, under **Videos**, you will find offerings by master teachers of mindfulness, which will motivate and inform the week's topics. Under **Reading** are articles, formatted for easy reading and ready to be printed for your manual. If you are so inclined, you may also want to keep a "Mindfulness Journal" to write your impressions in a more free-form manner than just the worksheets and practice sheets allow.

Each week, the length of the video selections will vary, but the total will usually be 45 minutes or less. It's a good idea to choose a given day of the week and time (for example, Sunday at 8pm) so that you can watch them in one sitting. This can be done in place of your 30-minute practice for that day, if you like. Also, at least skim the readings on that day, but plan to read them in their entirety by the end of the week. The readings and the videos in the **Supplementary materials** section are entirely optional.

If English is not your native language, **Google Translate** is integrated into the site, but given that the translation is computer-generated, it's far from perfect. Be sure to read **Special Instructions for Language Translation**.

Daily Practice

You will be doing about **30 minutes of daily practice**, and each week introduces a new set of practices. You can find the audio for each of these "Guided Practices" in the menu just to the left of this text. Each week, you will print a **Formal Practice sheet** which is tailored for that week and will be your guide for that week's practice. **[NOTE: The main practices range between 32 and 37 minutes in length, and there are a few which are shorter than 30 minutes.]**

In addition, there is **Informal Practice**, which will help you integrate the learnings and practices into your daily life. Unlike the formal practice, you don't have to schedule this into your day, it's simply having an intention to bring a special awareness into some of the activities that you already do on a daily basis. At the end of each day, you will take just five minutes or so to reflect on the day, using that week's **Informal Practice sheet** as a guide. Although this may look less important than the 30 minutes of scheduled formal practice, it is through the Informal Practice that you will see and realize the concrete and natural benefits of the learnings and practices of MBSR.

Health Considerations

Many people come to the course with some physical limitations and it's important that you know that **you are free to modify any of the practices, especially the yoga sequences, to make them best work for you. Being aware of your own limits, and modifying the practices when necessary is, in itself, mindfulness in action.**

Also, during the course of this program, whether you have physical limitations or not, it is possible, even likely, that difficult feelings or unpleasant memories may arise. Since this program is done without interaction with an instructor, it is important that you take care of your own emotional and mental health. ***If things come up which are too difficult to handle, you should take a break from the course and/or seek the help of a good counselor or therapist. If you are under a counselor or doctor's care already, please let them know of your plan to go through this program, and keep them informed of your experience as you go along, so that they may monitor any unexpected reactions to the course or practices.***

Ready to start?

Once you've completed the **Getting Started Worksheet** you're ready to go! ***When you're ready, just click on Week 1 in the left-hand menu you see above.*** In this menu are links to each of the eight weeks, and the **Guided Practices**.