

MINDFULNESS AT WORK

The world is won by those who let it go. – Lao Tzu

Employers understand the benefits of mindfulness. A number of well-known companies have begun implementing mindfulness programs for their employees including Apple, Google, Deutsche Bank, Procter & Gamble and General Mills. Among other benefits, employers cite increased productivity, greater focus, enhanced creativity, better problem-solving and decision-making and improved listening as just some of the ways that mindfulness can help optimize performance in the workplace. However, as an employee, you do not necessarily need a workplace mindfulness program to begin to reap many of the benefits of mindfulness in the workplace. There are a number of simple ways that you can begin to practice greater mindfulness at work:

- Begin each day with a mindfulness exercise, such as the mindful breath.
- Before entering the workplace, remind yourself of your organization's purpose.
- Throughout the day, pause to be fully present in the moment before undertaking the next critical task.
- If you are a manager or supervisor, take time to reflect and focus your awareness on your role as a leader within the organization.
- When stressful situations arise, practice "strategic" acceptance. Before reacting, observe your feelings and accept how things are at the moment. Then, make a plan to do what you can to improve the situation.
- Notice distractions and become aware of the effects they have on your body. Simply recognizing and observing distractions tends to rob them of their power.
- Take short breaks to practice mindfulness exercises at work to reduce stress and regain focus.
- Periodically, take time to reflect on your priorities to ensure that your time and energy is focused on the things that are most important.
- Take time to review the day's events at the close of the day to prevent work stresses from spilling into your home life.
- Take time to "unplug." Set aside your phone for a short walk on a lunchbreak or a three-minute breathing space in the afternoon. On the weekends, consider taking an afternoon to unplug so you can return to work on Monday feeling recharged.
- Before going to bed, end your day with a mindfulness exercise.

By incorporating even just one or two of these mindfulness at work strategies into your daily routine, you can begin to feel more in control of your day, and experience greater focus and awareness at work.

