



## Mindfulness: The Mind-Body Connection

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### Mindfulness & Depression

It is not uncommon for people with depression to ruminate with negative thoughts and self-talk. This might include things like “something is wrong with me” “my life is a mess” “I’ll never get a job” and similar kinds of self-talk.

These persistent thoughts often cause extreme sadness, distress, substance use and for some, may result in self-harm. Studies show that most people experiencing depression improve with talk therapy, medication, or some combination of the two. But another tool available to people experiencing depression is mindfulness. Not as a replacement for other forms of treatment but as a compliment.

### What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of what is happening in and around you in the present moment and without judgment. Awareness is the foundation of mindfulness, reinforcing one’s sense of being in the here and now. Another way to say it is being mindfully aware of what you’re doing while you’re doing it.

Practicing mindfulness can help with depression. How? By training your mind to be aware of your thoughts – including negative thoughts about the past or future – and offering you the opportunity to redirect those thoughts into the present moment and a healthier space. It’s about noticing when your mind wanders off to thoughts in the past or future and bringing it back to focus on body sensations, like breathing.

### What Next Steps Should You Consider?

Start by learning more about mindfulness from the resources provided below. This includes free guided mindfulness exercises offered from multiple reliable sources. Talk with your treating provider(s) about how to incorporate mindfulness into your treatment plan. We are learning much more about the power and importance of mind-body connection. As we do, there are greater opportunities to enhance overall mental health and well-being. Mindfulness and meditation also offer important opportunities to strengthen resiliency, help prevent relapse and improve overall health.

### Free Guided Mindfulness and Resources:

UCLA Health: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

Center for Mindfulness, UC San Diego, School of Medicine:

<https://medschool.ucsd.edu/som/fmph/research/mindfulness/mindfulness-resources/Pages/default.aspx>

Center for Healthy Minds at the University of WI-Madison:

<https://centerhealthyminds.org/news/events/weekly-live-guided-meditations-with-healthy-minds-innovations>

Mindful Healthy Mind Healthy Life: <https://www.mindful.org/category/meditation/guided-meditation/>

### References:

1. Center for Healthy Minds University of Wisconsin - Madison. (2019) Mindfulness Meditation is Useful in Mental Health Treatment, but Evidence for Some Conditions Outpaces Others. <https://centerhealthyminds.org/news/mindfulness-meditation-is-useful-in-mental-health-treatment-but-evidence-for-some-conditions-outpaces-others>
2. Keng SL, et al. (2011) Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A review of Empirical Studies. Clinical Psychology Review.
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4. Powell, A. (2018) When science meets mindfulness. The Harvard Gazette. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/harvard-researchers-study-how-mindfulness-may-change-the-brain-in-depressed-patients/>

*Right Direction is an initiative from the American Psychiatric Association Foundation's Center for Workplace Mental Health and Employers Health, a professional benefits organization. Right Direction is supported by Takeda Pharmaceuticals U.S.A., Inc. (TPUSA) and Lundbeck U.S. The information on this website is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor. ©2013 - 2020 Right Direction.*