



Top tips for being more present in the moment!



'Live in the moment' and 'mindfulness' have become buzzwords. So what do they mean and why should it matter?

Living in the moment (also called mindfulness) is about paying attention to the here and now. Instead of letting your mind wander and focusing on stressful thoughts, difficult situations and the future, you stay aware of your current experiences and surroundings, whilst embracing your thoughts and feelings.

Buck the January trend

After the bright lights and excesses that come with the festive period, January can feel like the gloomiest month of the year – who can forget last week's Blue Monday? Add to that wintry weather, short days, Christmas debts and perhaps some unattainable resolutions, and it's no surprise that people can find themselves feeling sad, miserable, tired and stressed with low energy and a lack of motivation.

When we don't live in the moment, we can't see the good things happening around us. We may start to worry, overthink everything, become stuck in negative patterns of behaviour, have trouble sleeping, feel unhealthy and miss out on opportunities.

Become calm, relaxed and happy

Research shows that being more present in the moment can have a range of benefits, including improved relationships, increased productivity and more feelings of calmness and relaxation, all of which lead to greater levels of happiness and wellbeing. Here are some top tips so you can stop thinking too deeply, stay relaxed and find some joy in 2024.

1. Daily routine. You don't need to spend hours to achieve mindfulness – just a few moments every day can make all the difference, whether that's going for a walk, reading a book, chatting with friends or just staring out of the window.
2. Remove distractions. Switch off your smartphone, turn off the TV, log off your PC/laptop, put down your tablet and start to notice your surroundings – sight, sound, taste, touch and smell.
3. Embrace a one track mind. Instead of thinking about everything you should be doing, try to focus on just one thing at a time.
4. Slow down. When you are fully engaged and focused on the present moment, you are more aware of your surroundings and any sensory experiences, which makes everything feel richer and more fulfilling.
5. Change your mindset. Stop worrying about what happened in the past and don't fear what might happen in the future. The only important moment is the present moment.
6. Stop judging yourself. Good enough is ok; you don't need to strive for perfection. Remember it's ok to fail, mess things up, or get it wrong sometimes.
7. Forgive yourself and others. It's worth remembering that resentments keep us mentally trapped in the past instead of helping us to move toward a better future.
8. Be grateful. It's not about what you don't have or what you think you need, but more about appreciating what you have now – friends, family, home, job, security etc.
9. Do something kind for someone else. Performing small random acts of kindness can help you to refocus your attention on what's happening in front of you.
10. Smile and laugh more often. Science has found that the act of smiling or laughing can lift your mood, lower stress, boost your immune system and possibly even prolong your life.

The better you are at living in the moment, the happier you will be. Sometimes though we can find it hard to let go and instead of doing, just let ourselves be. If you need help to cultivate mindfulness, call 07734 080073.