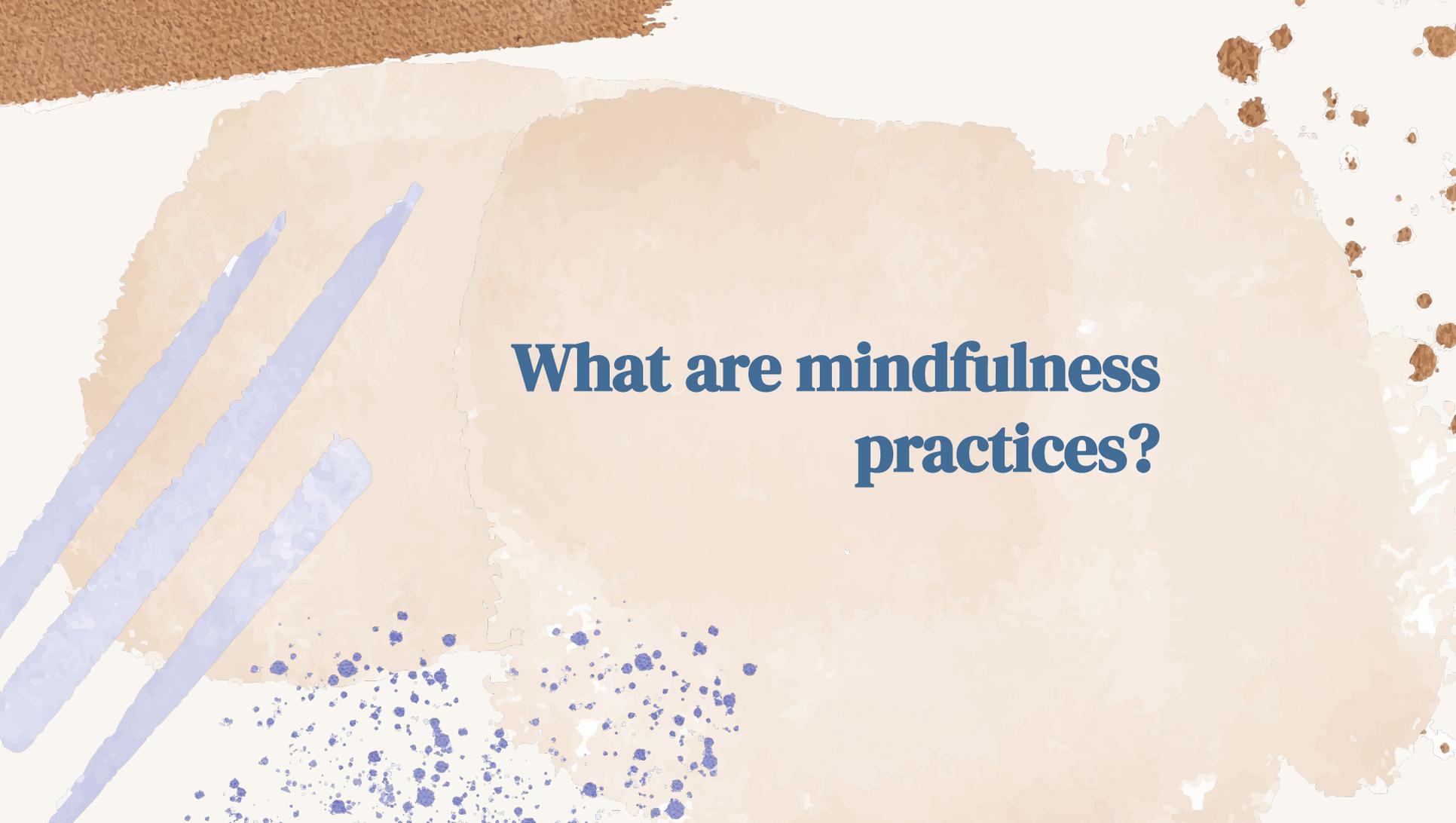


Mindfulness Practices

By: Logan Sherrer, Doctorate of Occupational Therapy
Student

Objectives

1. Participants able to recall and demonstrate mindfulness practices to incorporate in their climbing to reduce anxiety on the wall
2. Participants able to recall and demonstrate mindfulness practices to incorporate in their everyday lives
3. Participants able to explain how mindfulness practices reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
4. Participants identify times in their life where they can apply mindfulness practices



**What are mindfulness
practices?**

Mindfulness practices

Mindfulness is a form of meditation where the goal is to become aware of your self, environment, and actions.

- In daily life, we take many things for granted and live in routine
- Mindfulness leads us to think of the why, what, and how

In mindfulness one directs their attention away from expectations, thought, and biases and focuses on living in the moment

- With all the distractions and expectation of life it is important to find time to be still and reconnect with our self

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)

Mindfulness practices

Mindfulness does not always have to be a structured activity, but can simply be an adjusted way of thinking and being.

Structured

- Classes
- Mindfulness activities
- Meditation

Passive

- Focused breathing
- Be in the moment
- Pay attention to body and what's around you

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)



**What mindfulness
practices do you
currently use?**

Example mindfulness practices

Classes

- Guided meditation
- Yoga
- Cultural ceremonies

Activities

- Body scan
- Sensory activity
- Personal meditation
- Journaling

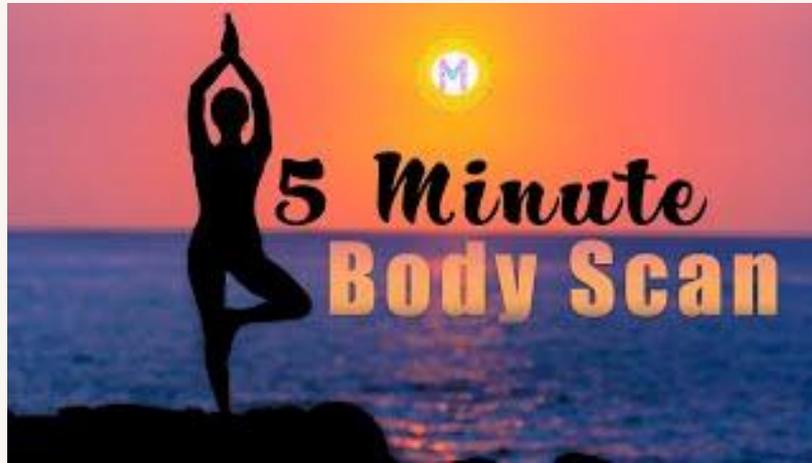
Passive

- Mindful eating
- Aware breathing
- Body awareness

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)

Lets try it!

Body Scan:





**When would you use
mindfulness practices?**

Using mindfulness practices

Mindfulness practices can be done anytime and anywhere

- Certain activities can be done in the moment during times of stress
 - Reduce anxiety while climbing
 - Decrease workday stressors
 - Used in other moments where triggers for anxiety may be present
- More structured activities require a quiet place and time to set aside
 - Meditation
 - Yoga
 - Body scan

Evidence supports that practicing mindfulness outside or before you start your day has increased benefits in supporting mental health! (Lothes et al., 2019)

(Lothes et al., 2019: Mayo Clinic, 2022)

Using mindfulness practices

Evidence supports that mindfulness practices have many positive benefits on health and mental

wellness: (Mayo Clinic, 2022)

- Reduce symptoms of depression
- Reduce symptoms of anxiety
- Reduce pain
- Improve sleep
- Decrease high blood pressure

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)



**How could you apply
mindfulness practices
to your climbing?**

Mindful Climbing

Climbing mindfully can not only reduce anxiety while climbing but also help you to continue to find joy in your climbs

To climb mindfully:

- Focus on the feel of the holds
- Focus on your breath
- Notice how you feel
 - Does your body feel strong today
 - Does it feel weaker
- Be mindful of the elements
 - How does the weather impact my climbing experience
 - How is this tactile sensation of the rock different from other climbs



(Knox, 2013)

Mindful Climbing

On a new climb your mind may be more focused on fear, navigation, or accomplishment rather than enjoying the moment and clearing the mind.

- Climbing a familiar route or boulder may be beneficial to experience the subtle nuances and learn more about your body and skills

Reframe the experience of climbing away from accomplishing a higher grade:

- This mindset may lead to additional stress and self-doubt
- Climbing hard-grades is **OKAY**, but we must learn to be okay with listening to our body, finding peace on the wall, and learning from our failures

Remember to enjoy the views and beauty of our surroundings

- Climbing offers a unique beauty of the world that we often forget

Survey





**Additional readings:
Current research on the
benefits of climbing and
mindfulness practices**

Evidence to support therapeutic benefits of mindfulness practices

- Evidence supports that mindfulness practices whether facilitated in a class, through online services, or self-facilitate all have significant benefits to individuals' mental health (Lothes et al., 2019)
- Mindfulness practices are found to reduce stress in high anxiety situations
 - This may be applicable to rock climbing related stress
- Utilizing mindful practices outdoors is shown to have further positive mental health outcomes (Lothes et al., 2019)

Information from:

Lothes, J., Mochrie, K., Wilson, M., & Hakan, R. (2019). The effect of dbt-informed mindfulness skills (what and how skills) and mindfulness-based stress reduction practices on test anxiety in college students: A mixed design study: Research and Reviews. *Current Psychology*, 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00207-y>

Evidence to support therapeutic benefits of rock climbing

- Exercise alone has long time been a proven way to reduce anxiety (Karg et al., 2020)
- Exercise causes our body to increase heart rate and respiration to trick the mind into responding to a fear response even if something is not actually there
- Climbing as a form of exercise or recreation is found to be even more effective than traditional exercise alone (Karg et al., 2020)
 - Outlet for adrenaline
 - Clears the mind
 - Community engagement and support

Information from:

Karg, N., Dorscht, L., Kornhuber, J., & Luttenberger, K. (2020). Bouldering psychotherapy is more effective in the treatment of depression than physical exercise alone: Results of a multicentre randomised controlled intervention study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 20(116), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02518-y>

Cultural considerations

- Evidence suggests that community-based exercise is an effective means to provide mental health support to marginalized and lower-socioeconomic communities (Lamb et al., 2015)
- These individuals may not have as easy or comfortable access to traditional mental health services
 - Community engagement and exercise reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Climbers should continue to provide a welcoming and culturally sensitive community (Lamb et al., 2015)
 - Supportive communities help to reduce external stressors

Information from:

Lamb, Dowrick, C., Burroughs, H., Beatty, S., Edwards, S., Bristow, K., Clarke, P., Hammond, J., Waheed, W., Gabbay, M., & Gask, L. (2015). Community Engagement in a complex intervention to improve access to primary mental health care for hard-to-reach groups. *Health Expectations: an International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy*, 18(6), 2865–2879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12272>

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<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>