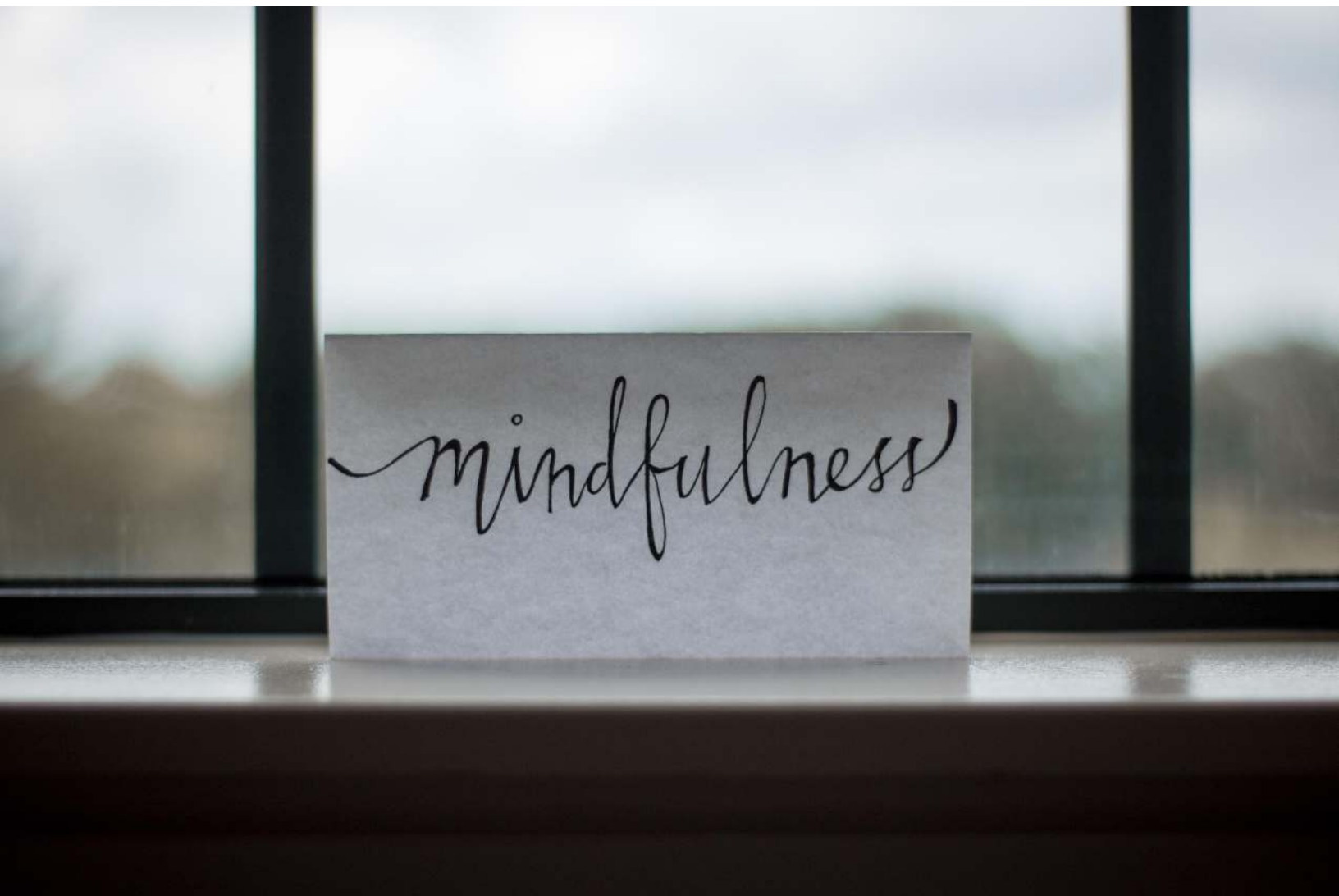


# Mindfulness at Work

## Your Guide to Being Present



# Why be Mindful at Work?

## Improves:

- Physical and psychological health
- Task performance
- Job satisfaction
- Blood pressure
- Focus
- Ability to recognize emotions without suppressing them

## Reduces:

- Anxiety and stress
- Reduce emotional exhaustion
- Stress and associated symptoms
- Distractions
- Automaticity of tasks

Driving to work becomes an automatic task and most people don't remember their journey to the office. **How did you get to work today?**

Mindfulness can help reduce burnout and emotional exhaustion from surface acting. Surface acting is related to emotional burnout, and is when:

- 1 An employee perceives a situation negatively (ex. Getting yelled at by a customer)
- 2 The employee feels negative emotions about the situation (ex. anger, sadness)
- 3 The employee suppresses their feelings and fakes a positive demeanor. This is common in workplaces with emotional display rules, which prevent employees from showing negative emotions.

When practicing mindfulness, employees can recognize that experiences are not reflections of themselves as individuals, and can be with their emotions, rather than suppress them. They can see the experience for what it is, recognize how they feel, and respond in a less emotionally taxing way.

# What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness: Purposefully being present in the moment and noting internal experiences (emotions or thoughts) and external events without judgement.



Mindfulness does not have to be meditation. It is simply being in the present, instead of letting our mind think about the future or ruminate on the past. It is being intentional with our actions, and recognizing experiences for what they are – without analyzing or reflecting upon it. Mindfulness is different for everyone, and can change within an individual throughout the day.

# How To Be Mindful At Work

Support mindfulness in the workplace by creating a supportive culture. Employers, support the health of your employees by encouraging them to set aside quiet time during the day to be mindful, and then lead by example. Employees, support your coworkers by discussing mindfulness at work, setting up accountability buddies to support each other, or organizing group meditation times.

## **Find What Works for You**

Pick a time that works best for you, when you will be uninterrupted and in the right mindset.

No one size fits all, find what works for you that day. This could include meditation, journaling, or simply being mindful during your activities that day.

## **Set Reminders**

Set calendar reminders or post visual reminders in your space to remind you to be present. This could include reminders that say:

- Be Present
- Be Mindful
- Practice mindfulness
- What am I grateful for?

## **One Thing at a Time**

Being present involves doing one task at a time, and not trying to multitask.

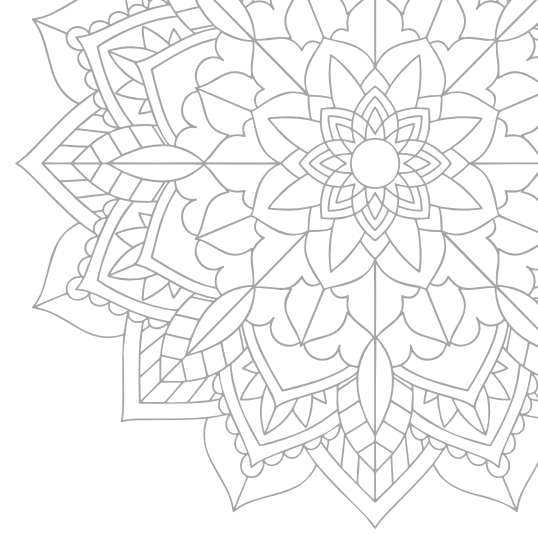
This includes physical and mental multitasking. While you are working, try to remain focused and notice if your mind wanders to other tasks.

## **Be Present**

Be mindful of what you are doing and notice the movements, feelings, and sensations. View the activities as they are, without judgement or assumptions.

Notice if your mind wanders. Gently bring your attention and energy back to the task.

# Mindfulness Exercises



## Meditation

Taking the time to be intentionally present, while remaining non-judgemental if your mind wanders. Guided meditations can be found on Youtube or apps such as MyLife Meditation, or meditate on your own as outlined below:

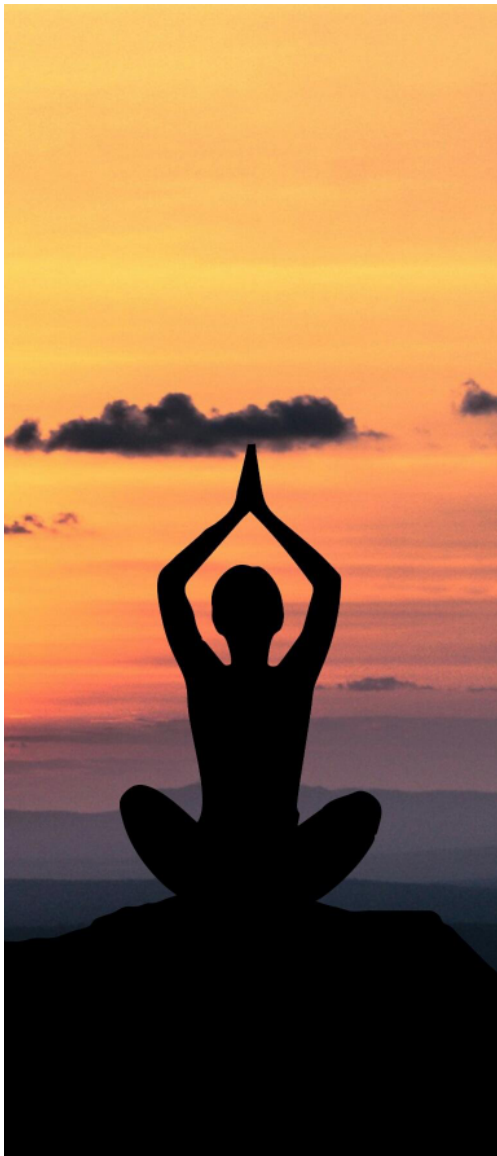
- 1 Set aside an uninterrupted time to meditate, and find a quiet and comfortable place to take a seat. Close your eyes and notice how your body feels on the floor or cushion.
- 2 Take a few moments to notice how your breath feels as you inhale and exhale, and connect with your breath. As you breathe, slow your mind and bring your attention to the sensation of your breath.
- 3 If you find your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to your breath and the present moment. Wandering minds are fine and completely normal, so be kind with yourself if you notice your mind is wandering.
- 4 When you are done, feel proud for taking this time for yourself, and notice how you feel for a few moments when you are done.

**Remember that meditation is a practice, not a cure, so be sure to set aside time everyday.**

# Mindfulness Exercises

## Body Scan

Tune in and connect with your body, and notice any sensations without judgement.



- 1 Sit comfortably in your chair, or lay down if you can. Take a few seconds to notice how your body feels on the chair or floor.
- 2 Close your eyes, slowly take notice of each part of your body starting at your feet. How do they feel on the surface, are they tense, do they have any sensations? Notice how each body part feels without judgement.
- 3 Take a breath between each body part as you work up the body. If you notice your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to your body and breath.
- 4 Notice how you feel when you are done, and take a few seconds to reflect.

# Mindfulness Exercises

## Mindfulness for Ruminating

Rumination is constantly thinking about past mistakes, negative feelings or current distress. If we messed up at work or had a bad experience, ruminating on negative thoughts and emotions can affect our mental health.

- 1 Take time to recognize what emotions you are holding onto. How does your body feel? Do you feel heaviness, flutters, pain, or tension anywhere? Take notice of these experiences in a non-judgmental way, and show compassion and acceptance toward the situation. Accept what cannot be changed, and note how you will go forward from the experience.
- 2 Rumination can distract us from the present moment, so shift your focus back to the present with a deep breath. Reflect on these questions:
  - What thought/experience was I ruminating on?
  - Why did it come up?
  - What feelings about myself came up when I was ruminating?
  - Does ruminating on this experience benefit me?
  - What would I tell someone if they shared with me that they were experiencing these feelings because of this experience?

# Mindfulness Exercises

## Mindfulness Journaling

Put yourself in a mindful space, connect with how you are feeling, and take notice of the space you are in. Be sure to set aside enough time to reflect.

Take a breath, try and slow your mental chatter, and write down how you are feeling right now, sensations you feel, and why you are feeling the way you are. Do this without judgement. If it is a negative experience, reflect on how you are feeling and how you can go forward from the experience with kindness towards yourself.





# Mindfulness Exercises

## Mindfulness During Activities



Find an activity that isn't work related, something that you find relaxing and you can practice being mindful while you do it. This could include:

- Go for a walk outside
- Sit in a quiet space with your favorite beverage
- Do some coloring
- Exercising
- Reading

Try to stay present with what you are doing, and notice how you feel while you are doing it. These activities are good self-care, and they can help you be present with things that you love doing. Take a second to reflect on how you feel after.

# Mindfulness Exercises



## Gratitude

Mindfulness and gratitude have been shown to be linked, by connecting with the positive aspects of our experiences. It can also help us react to negative experiences with acceptance. Here are some tips to be more grateful today:

- 1 Reflect on your week, and take note of one thing that you are really grateful for. It could be family, friends, a pet, a good meal, flowers, coffee, etc. Sit with that thought for a while and notice how you feel after thinking about what you are grateful for.
- 2 Tell someone you appreciate them, and why you are grateful to have them in your life or as a coworker. Maybe do a small act of kindness for them to show your gratitude.
- 3 Think of someone you love when they are at their absolute happiness. Feel their love, their laugh, and smile, and how they made you feel. Sit with that feeling for a while.
- 4 Take notice when people do something for you, no matter how small, and give them a genuine thank you. Be present and recognize what others are doing around you.

# Mindfulness Exercises

## Gratitude Journaling

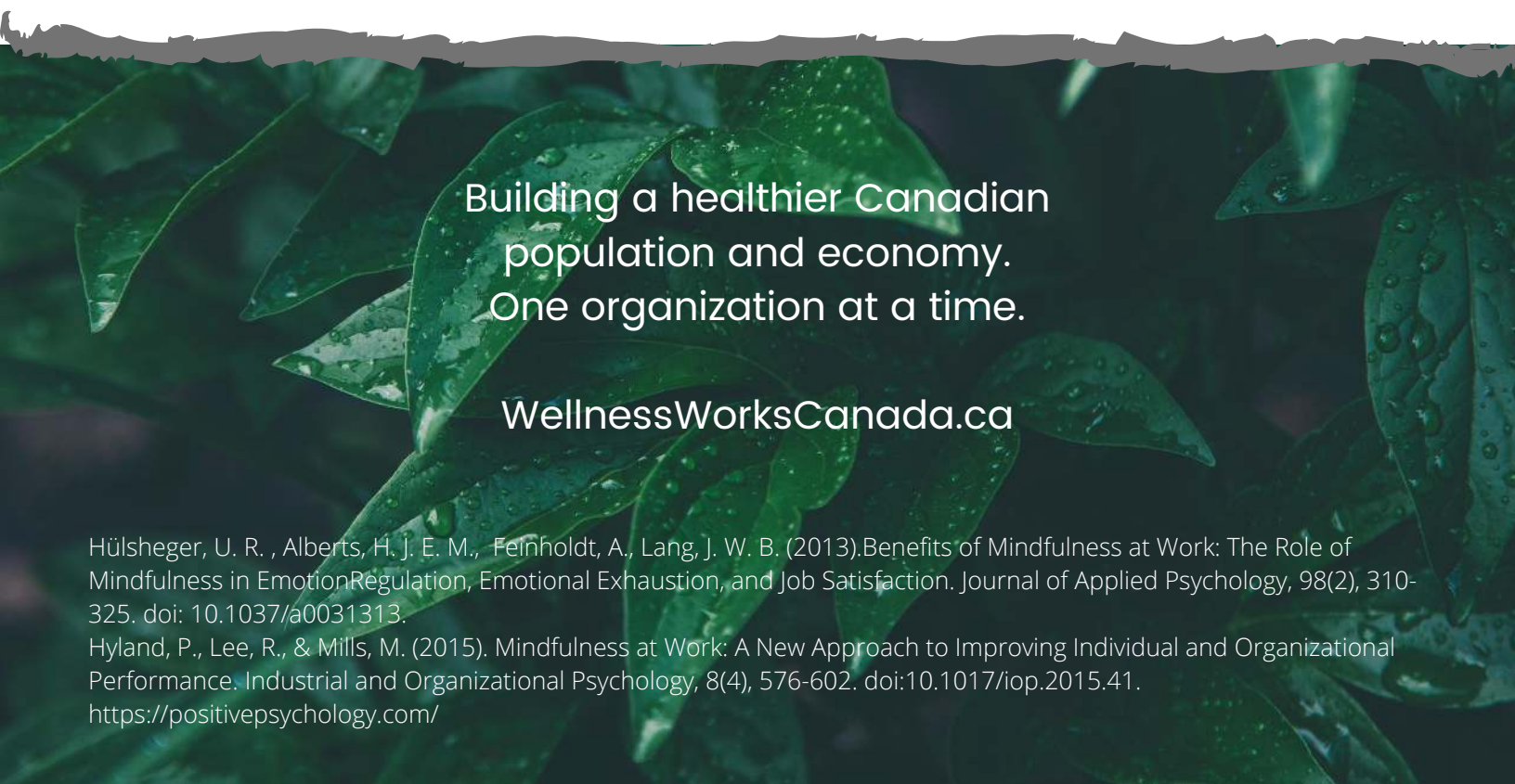
Journaling about what we are grateful for can help us to focus on positive aspects of our experiences, take less for granted, and handle negative experiences better. Here are some guided journal prompts to practice gratitude:

- Today, I am grateful for....
- What was my favorite part about this week?
- What is a skill I have that I am grateful for?
- What challenges did I overcome this week?
- What was something positive that happened to me today?
- What is something that made me smile this week?
- What is one lesson I have learned from my work that I'm grateful for?
- What is something I excel in at work?
- What are 5 things I am grateful to have that others may not have?
- What is something I look forward to after work everyday?
- How have I grown and learned as a professional compared to when I started?
- List 10 things you like about your job or workplace.

# Find other resources and support online at [wellnessworkscanada.ca](http://wellnessworkscanada.ca)

- Resilience Tip Sheets
- Mental Health First Aid Kits
- Breathing Exercises
- Mental Health Resources
- Health & Performance Workshops
- Resilience Training
- Guide to the built environment at work
- Planning guides and templates
- Community or practice
- Webinars
- And much more

Thank you to **Alli Dettling, B. Kin, WHPA** for contributions to this guide.



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[WellnessWorksCanada.ca](http://WellnessWorksCanada.ca)

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