

# **Better Daily Mindfulness Habits: Simple Changes with Lifelong Impact**

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Rockridge Press: July 2021

Book Excerpt

The capacity to be present and aware is a gift embedded in our human design. Every person has the ability to contemplate experiences and even think about thinking. When you seek awareness mindfully and intentionally, you step into the laboratory of your life. As you study, experiment, and tweak, you raise your conscious and become capable of infinite growth.

And yet, it's easy to fall into mindlessness and walk through life on autopilot.

For decades, neuroscientists and neuropsychologists have sought to understand the human ability to reshape the brain to favor mindfulness over mindlessness. They have found that through self-directed neuroplasticity, metacognition, and intrapersonal attunement, it is possible to redirect the mind and change your level of awareness.

A reliable tool for making these changes is habit. Any activity you do with enough consistency becomes automated and no longer requires deliberate focus. In effect, it becomes effortless. Using the power of habits, mindfulness can become effortless, too.

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Whether your goal is to become more present and productive or compassionate and creative, the first step is turning your awareness to the present moment. Mindfulness habits, coupled with the right intention and attention, etch mental grooves in the brain that allow you to return to your awareness over and over again.

Your mind is designed for habits. Now, let's harness this power for good.

## **Barriers to Mindfulness**

You can set up an incredible support system of habits to cultivate mindfulness and conscious living, but it's all for nothing if you don't also take the time to remove the hurdles that impede your ability to be mindful.

There are a number of behaviors that may seem to calm or steady you in times of stress or that can give a false sense of accomplishment in your daily life. In the long run, these behaviors can sabotage your mindfulness goals.

**Technology:** Smartphones have become a seemingly indispensable part of daily life. The trouble is, smartphones and apps distract you from the present moment and entice you into unconscious, repetitive behaviors, like scrolling mindlessly dozens of times each day.

**Lack of self-care:** The better you care for yourself, the better you become at responding to life's inevitable challenges and trials. Sleep, good nutrition, regular meals, rest, exercise, play, and connection with others are just some of the many elements that help you fill your resilience tank and live with more presence.

**Multitasking:** Most of us have developed the skill of being able to do many things at once. No wonder mindfulness is a challenge. No matter how clever you are at stacking multiple tasks, each task will suffer from the lack of your full attention. It's truly impossible to connect with others, yourself, and the present moment when you are doing several things at once. Part of the intention to live a more mindful, conscious life is the commitment to doing only one thing at a time.

**Clutter:** Besides creating a sense of sanctuary, simplicity, and cleanness, an organized environment can help you feel more grounded and freer from distraction. Clutter can make you feel hemmed in to the point that you feel robbed of your energy and gusto. But when you begin to eliminate your external chaos, you simultaneously settle your inner seas.

**Lack of solitude:** Solitude, when it's chosen, is beneficial. The time you spend on your own gives you space to contemplate your life and to discover who you are. It is in the gaps between your interactions with others that you power down and access your intuition, creativity, and insight.



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