

## Why Mindfulness Is Your Greatest Productivity Tool

What would you say is your greatest productivity tool? Most professionals or entrepreneurs would probably cite an app--a project management platform, a time tracking tool, or some other tech gadget designed to help you get more done in a day. However, there may be something better to increase both your efficiency and your total level of production--and it doesn't require a device, an app, or a subscription.

Enter the world of mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness meditation is a practice of clearing your mind of distracting thoughts, and existing in a decompressed state of self, even if it's just for a few minutes. The idea is to sit somewhere comfortable, preferably free of distractions, and focus your attention on something benign, like the rhythm of your breathing or a point on the wall--not the latest app or distracting alert from your phone.

Whenever a distracting thought enters your mind--and it eventually will--acknowledge it, accept it, and let it go, returning your focus to its original point. Over time, you'll get better at this practice, to the point where you're able to rid yourself of distracting or bothersome thoughts in your everyday life much more easily.

So why is this such an important and effective tool to improve your productivity?



### Time and Convenience

One of the greatest advantages of mindfulness meditation is its accessibility. You can technically practice mindfulness in sessions just a few minutes long, and you don't need any special equipment or expensive apps to practice it. You can do it in your car, at home, or in the office, and you can do it at any time during the day (though it's better if you can make it a habit). That means literally anyone can use it, getting better at it with less than 20 minutes of commitment per day.

### Emotional Awareness and Self-Regulation

Your productivity is disproportionately defined by your emotional state. If you have a bad morning (dealing with traffic jams, unpleasant weather, etc.), it has the potential to compromise your effectiveness all day, and one negative comment from a client or supervisor can corrupt your thoughts for a week or longer. But with mindfulness, you learn to separate your conscious self from your gut-feeling emotional reactions; you become much more emotionally aware, and gain the ability to regulate your emotions. You might still get angry, depressed, or anxious, but those negative emotions will disappear far quicker, and have far less power over your productivity throughout the day.

## Brainstorming and Critical Thinking

Your mind needs empty time to decompress when brainstorming or trying to solve complex problems; that's why you always seem to come up with good ideas in the shower. Dedicating regular time to sitting in silence and clearing your mind gives you this all-too-important opportunity to let your ideas develop. It also prevents you from spending too much time on distracting thoughts when you're trying to focus on something important.

## Sleep

Studies show that practicing mindfulness regularly enables you to get a better night's sleep. When you get used to existing in a state of clear thought, and wandering thoughts no longer have the potential to distract you while trying to sleep, you get to sleep faster--and stay asleep longer. Getting the recommended 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night can drastically improve your focus, your attention, your cognitive abilities, and even your health. It's one of the most important habits you can develop for yourself, and mindfulness can be your path to success.

## Stress and Anxiety

Mindfulness gives you the immediate ability to rid yourself of stress and anxiety--especially when it's focused on little things that go wrong (or could go wrong) throughout the day. And people who practice mindfulness regularly are less susceptible to feeling stress or anxiety in the first place. This is good not just for helping you stay on track in the moment, but also for staying in better physical and mental health over time.

## Getting Started

So what do you need to get started with this dramatic, business-improving productivity tool? You can attend a mindfulness class or use an app to help you get the basics down, but these aren't strictly necessary. Instead, all you need is a bit of time to commit to the practice. Like with any skill, you'll get better at it the more consistently you do it.

Start with a short session--as little as 10 minutes--and just notice when your mind starts to wander from your core focus. Don't be surprised if you're distracted frequently during the session; instead, just notice what's happening in your mind. As you gain more experience, try practicing for longer sessions, and experimenting with different focal points. You may not notice the improvements in your emotional intelligence, patience, or productivity right away, but if you do it consistently, you will get better.