

Take A Break

Meditation isn't just for monks on a mountain! Brief mindfulness exercises can be incorporated into anyone's life with significant positive effects. Using mindfulness and meditation as a means of relaxation can diminish anxiety, reduce risk of dementia, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, help manage chronic pain, improve concentration, etc. It takes as little as 10-15 minutes a day of practice to begin seeing positive effects!

Begin by sitting or lying somewhere comfortable. Find a place that is safe, relatively free of distractions, is not too hot or too cold, and where you are unlikely to be disturbed. Begin by taking long, slow, deep breaths: in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to focus all of your awareness on your breathing. Notice your chest expanding and deflating. Pay attention to your shoulders raising and lowering. Imagine your diaphragm moving up and down. Think about the air rushing up in through your nostrils and out again past your tongue, teeth and lips. You can also focus on other physical sensations while you do this. Perhaps you spend some time recognizing the tension you are carrying in your shoulders and release of this tension as you breathe. Maybe your legs are feeling sore from the previous day's work or exercise and you focus on stretching and soothing those muscles.

Remember, nobody is an expert at this immediately! You will get distracted, you will have thoughts pop into your mind. When this happens, imagine those things as a cloud in the sky or a leaf in a stream and allow them to simply float past you, then refocus your attention on your breathing. Start slow; begin with only a minute or two. As your skill increases, so can the amount of time you spend practicing this skill.

This is just one simple, basic skill. If you are interested in learning more, feel free to make an appointment with a member of our Mental and Behavioral Health Team!



Want to talk? Now offering Individual, Couples and Family Counseling on a Sliding Fee Scale at Clark Fork Valley Hospital and Family Medicine Network:

Kate Whipple-Kilmer, Psy.D., Resident Psychologist and Diana Reetz-Stacey, MSW

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