

*Mindful Moments Project*  
**University of Arizona**  
Teachers' Manual

1. Introductions
2. What is mindfulness?
3. Demonstration: Experience, Reflection, & Practice
4. Review of procedures
5. Closing & Questions

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## **What is Mindfulness?**

Mindfulness means being aware of what you are doing, what you are thinking, and what you are feeling -- noticing not only the nature of your thoughts and acts and feelings, but also their effects on yourself and those around you.

Why is mindfulness important in school? The classroom is one of the most important places where children develop awareness of self and others. School is about social-emotional learning as well as academics, arts, and PE. Without the basics of social-emotional intelligence, all the other learning opportunities we provide to students cannot be fully enjoyed. Mindful practice is a gateway for students to develop their awareness while learning to relax. This helps them be more comfortable with themselves and with other people. This comfort liberates inner resources for exploring ideas, learning new skills, and working well with others.

## **Reasons for Mindful Practice**

Research has found that exercises such as mindful movement, conscious breathing, and meditation benefit many aspects of life. Areas of improvements include:

- For children and youth
  - Academic performance
  - Physical and psychological health
  - Emotional regulation
  - Social interactions
  
- For adults
  - Immunity
  - Chronic pain
  - Sleep quality
  - Cognitive control
  - Emotional regulation
  - Mood

## **School-Based Efforts**

Several programs have been developed to bring mindfulness into the school setting. Here's one example, the MindUP program, a product of the Hawm Foundation:

- 10-week SEL (social-emotional learning) curriculum led by teachers

- The teacher curriculum includes one 50-minute module each week, targeting positive emotions, negative thinking, goal setting, and interpersonal relationships.
- Students are coached through three, 3-minute exercises per day, following the four components of the mindfulness program (i.e., quieting the mind, mindful attention, managing negative emotions, acknowledgement of self and others).
- Results: increases in optimism and self-concept among preadolescent participants, in addition to improvements in empathy, emotional control, and optimism.

Other programs include *Learning to Breathe* and *Mindful Schools*.

### **How will this Project be different?**

The Mindful Moments Project (MMP) shares fundamental tenets with these programs, recognizing that stress, fatigue, and distraction get in the way of students making the most of their school day. We know that calming the brain, relaxing, and renewing one's energy-can unlock powers within the child's mind. MMP's distinctions include:

1. Using a simple repertoire of exercises
2. Taking the "brief treatment" approach, with three short practice sessions a day, as appropriate for the class schedule
3. Encouraging classroom ownership of mindful practice through brief reflective discussions as appropriate
4. Inviting teachers and students, once they are familiar with the repertoire and the mindfulness principles, to select which exercises they will use, and to elaborate on them as time goes on

### **The Mindful Moment**

*The purpose of the Mindful Moment is to create a shared experience of relaxation, awareness, and mental refreshment. In just 2-3 minutes, students can let go of tension and restore a sense of well-being. You may find the Mindful Moment useful at formal transition points, or any time you feel the class could use a break.*

Here is the structure for each 2- to 3-minute session:

- Give a brief introduction, and name the exercise (e.g., foot release).
- Lead students in the activity, whether in part (e.g., foot release 1) or in full (e.g., foot release 1 and 2). Refer to script as necessary.
- Reflect on the experience: pose a simple question (e.g., "What did you notice?") and take at least one student's comment.

## EXERCISES

*Here is the basic repertoire of mindfulness exercises that we invite you to explore with you class. We suggest that you introduce some of them in parts, as noted in this table. There's a sample calendar of introduction on page 13. Thereafter, please combine multiple parts or utilize individual parts as you see fit. We would love to hear what exercises you use most often, and any other observations you would like to share.*

<b>Full Exercise</b>	<b>Parts</b>	<b>Action (with inhale and exhale)</b>
Shoulder release	1	Both shoulders together
	2	One shoulder at a time, with head movement
Neck release		Rotation (turn head to side); flexion & extension (tipping head forward and back); lateral flexion (tilting head to side)
Foot release		Lifting ball of foot; lifting heel
Breathing tall		Lengthening the spine
Rising mountain	1	Arms rise with inhale, return to side with exhale
	2	Bending forward at hips
Breathing deeply	1	Into belly
	2	Into ribs
	3	Lifting collar bone
Square breathing		Inhale 4, Exhale 4
Focused breathing	1	In the belly
	2	In the chest
	3	In the throat
	4	In the nostrils
	5	At the point between the eyebrows

*On the following pages, you will find instructions for each exercise, including sample introductions. Feel free to use these scripts liberally – adjusting, polishing, and elaborating the language as you gain familiarity with their intent and with children's responses. You will no doubt come up with your own vignettes, questions, and other ways to mindfully introduce the ideas and experiences of mindfulness.*

### ***Shoulder Release***

Start with lifting both shoulders together. Focus on “slow, smooth, and relaxed.”

- *Sample script part 1:* Let’s say that you are feeling tight in your upper shoulders. This can happen after hunching over your desk for a while. You can release that tightness by focusing on your shoulders and contracting your muscles further, and then slowly letting go. Let’s try it now: breathing in, lift your shoulders slowly up toward your ears . . . breathing out, slowly let your shoulders settle back down to each side. Again, inhale softly and lift your shoulders toward your ears... Exhale, and bring them back down. One more time...
  - Now, rest for a moment and notice how that movement affected you.
  - Gently, let’s open our eyes... What did you notice?
  
- *Part 2:* Now, let’s focus on our neck muscles. Sometimes when we’ve been looking up at the board or down at our work, we can accumulate tension in our necks. We’ll start with just one shoulder at a time: breathing in, lift the right shoulder while tilting the head gently to the right. Breathing out, return the head to center and relax the shoulder down completely. Now do this same movement with your left side. Inhale, tilt your head slowly to the left. Exhale, bring your head back to center. Once more on the right side, inhale slowly tilt your head to the right. Exhale, back up to center. Now on the left, inhale slowly tilting your head to the left. Exhale, gently bringing your head back to center.
  - Pause for a moment, with your head center and your shoulders relaxed. Feel how that affected you... Now, please open your eyes...
  - What did you notice this time? Do you feel less tightness?

### ***Neck Release***

You will teach three different head movements: turning the head, tilting it forward and back, and tilting to the side. These exercises in particular may demonstrate to students how much they’re using their neck and shoulder muscles when they study, bringing awareness to how hard their bodies are working for them, sometimes unnecessarily so.

- *Sample script:* Do you ever feel tight in your neck? This may happen after reading or writing with your head down. You can release that tightness by moving your head, very slowly and smoothly, without any force. Here’s one way: “rotating our necks,” that is, turning our heads in a slow, mindful way. Breathing in, easily turn your head to the right; breathing out, slowly bring your head back to center. Again, as you inhale, let your head turn to the right, almost as if it’s floating. Exhaling, let it float back to center. Once more, inhale, your head floats to the right, not very far. Exhale,

come center. Now, to the left. Inhaling, slowly your head turns to the left. Exhaling, slowly your head returns to the center. Twice more to the left, at your own easy pace.

Sitting tall in your chair, feet flat on the floor, place your fingertips lightly on your forehead. Take a nice deep breath in and, as you exhale, gently tilt your chin toward your chest, pushing your fingertips with your forehead. As you inhale, slowly return to center. Again, exhale and gently bring your chin down toward your chest. Inhale and slowly bring your head up again, letting your fingers follow, not pushing. Once more.

Now, place your right hand lightly against the right side of your head. Breathing in, lengthen your spine. Breathing out, gently push your hand away as you tilt your head to the right. Breathing in, slowly return to center. Again, exhale and softly push your hand to the right side. When you inhale, slowly bring your head back to center, with your hand following the head, not pushing it. One more time. Now, the other side, bring your left hand up to the left side of your head. Breathing in, again lengthen your spine. Breathing out, gently push your hand away as you tilt your head to the left. Breathing in return your head to center. Exhaling again, tilt your head to the left. Inhale back to center. Once more.

- Pause for a moment to let yourself feel how this exercise affected you.
- How is this different from the exercise earlier, where we brought awareness to our necks?

### ***Foot Release***

Like the earlier moves, this exercise releases tension by mindfully recruiting muscles in each foot and then slowly and smoothly letting go of the contractions in the muscles. This is a particularly good exercise following a lot of activity (e.g., play at recess), or after students have been sitting for a long time.

- *Sample script:* Let's say you are feeling tense in your feet. This can happen after running around the playground at recess, or from sitting still too long. You can release that tightness by gently moving parts of your feet and then relaxing them. Let's try it now. As you breathe in, gently lift the balls of your feet off the floor, while your heels stay on the ground. When you breathe out, bring your feet softly down. Breathing in, lift the balls of your feet up . . . Breathing out, softly bring them back to the ground. One more time, inhale and gently bring the balls of your feet up, and back down on the exhale.

Now, let's keep the balls of our feet on the floor, and lift our heels instead. Inhaling, slowly lift just your heels off the floor, leaving the balls of your feet in place. Exhale,

slowly bring your heels back down. Notice how your breath leads this movement, as though it were your breath that did all the lifting. Inhale, your heels float off the floor. Exhale, your heels float back down. One more time: inhale slowly and softly – lifting the heels of your feet. When you exhale, gently let them come back down.

- Rest. Feel your feet, and anywhere else in your body.
- Let's take a moment to open our eyes.
- What did you notice this time?

### ***Breathing Tall***

This exercise encourages students to notice how their breath is tied to so many other actions in their bodies.

- *Sample script:* Have you ever noticed when you sit for a long time that your body seems to shrink or get a little crumpled? Let's un-shrink our bodies, so we can feel our energy again. Sit [or stand] comfortably upright, with your feet flat on the floor. As you breathe in, imagine that you are growing taller. Let your spine grow longer and let the top of your head lift up to the sky. You may feel your chest expand and your low back slightly arch. As you breathe out, gently let your stomach sink inward, and the curve in your low back flatten... Again, breathing in, let the top of your head lift up to the sky, and your whole spine lengthen. Breathing out, relax... Inhale, breathe taller. Exhale and relax. (Repeat 2-3 more times.)
- Pause. With your eyes closed, just feel this for a moment. When you are ready, open your eyes slowly.
- What did you notice, anything?

### ***Rising Mountain***

This exercise requires students to become aware of not only their breath and their bodies, but of their surroundings as well – observing their personal space and that of their neighbors.

- *Sample script part 1:* Just looking at mountains can make us feel taller and stronger. Let's feel taller and stronger by imagining that our bodies are mountains. Place your hands down at your sides. Now, watching for our neighbors, let's slowly lift our arms out to the sides and overhead. Reach tall like Mount Lemmon in Tucson. Now, exhale slowly and let your arms come back down very smoothly. Inhaling, your arms lift up again, reaching to the sky. Exhaling, watching for our neighbors still, our arms come down slowly. Notice how your spine seems to get longer as you inhale and lift again. Let your spine keep its length even as you exhale and let your arms float down to your sides. (Repeat 2-3 more times.)

- Close your eyes and feel how that movement affected your body.
- Did you see a mountain in your mind's eye? What kind of mountain did you see?
- *Part 2:* Now, let's add the Setting Sun. Starting with your hands at your sides, breathe in and reach up to the sky. Breathing out, slowly bend forward from the hips. If you are sitting: slide your hands down your knees, your calves, even to your ankles or the floor if comfortable. Let your neck relax and your head gently hang forward. If you are standing: bend your knees as you slide your hands down your thighs all the way to your knees, possibly to your calves or further. Draw your tummy in and tuck your chin toward your chest.

Breathing in, turn your tail under and unfurl upward, slowly lifting your arms again to the sky. Breathing out, let your hands come down once again, sliding your hands down your thighs and knees, relaxing forward. When it's time to inhale, slowly lift your hands to the sky again. Once more, exhale and slide your hands down just as far as comfortable. Inhale up to sky, then keep your mountain tall and exhale your arms down to your sides.

- Close your eyes. Notice the sensations created by the movement.
- What did you notice this time?

### ***Breathing Deeply***

This is a classic exercise for releasing tension, expanding the lungs, and clearing the mind. Students are invited to imagine their bellies expanding and shrinking like a balloon.

- *Sample script part 1:* Breathing is one of the most important things we do every day. Most of the time we forget that our breath is happening, because it happens all by itself. Breathing consciously, though, can help us let go of tension and clear our minds. One way of doing this is to pretend that our tummy is like a balloon. When you breathe in, imagine that balloon filling with air and expanding. When you breathe out, imagine the balloon shrinking. You can put your hand on your belly and feel the balloon: inhaling, it expands; exhaling, it collapses. Once more, inhale deeply and feel that balloon get bigger. When you exhale, feel the balloon get smaller.
- Now, relax the technique. Just feel your breathing without doing anything about it.
- How many could imagine the balloon in your mind's eye? What did you notice in your body when you breathed like a balloon?



- *Part 2:* Remember how last time we pretended our bellies were like balloons, and we could sense the balloon getting bigger and smaller with each breath? This time, let's pretend the balloon is in our rib cage. Take a nice deep breath in, and feel your ribs expand like a balloon. Exhale, and feel the balloon shrink. Again, breathe in and feel your ribs come out. Breathing out, notice how the balloon shrinks and your ribs come in. Once more, inhale and expand the rib cage. Exhale, and relax the ribs.
  - Could you sense the balloon in your rib cage this time?
- *Part 3:* Do you know where your collarbone is? It's the bone that goes across the top of your chest, connecting your shoulder to your breastbone. Can you feel it right up here [demonstrating]? Let's practice breathing into our collarbones. When you inhale, feel your collar bone lift. When you exhale, feel your collarbone come down gently. You may not notice much; it's a very small movement. Inhale again, notice the collarbone come up. And exhale, feel the collarbone come down. Once more. Now relax the movement.
  - What did you notice about your collarbone when you breathed that way?

### ***Square Breathing***

- *Sample script:* Sometimes we pretend that our belly is like a balloon. Other times we can think of our breath as a shape. Imagine a square. A square has four sides, right? (with your finger, draw a square in the air). We can pretend that our breath runs along the sides of a square. Try it with me. Breathe in 1, 2, 3, 4 and out 1, 2, 3, 4 (demonstrate with hand running along the side of a square). Notice we just got to two sides of the square. Again, inhale 1, 2, 3, 4 and exhale 1, 2, 3, 4. Once more around the square, breathe in 1, 2, 3, 4, and exhale softly 1, 2, 3, 4. And relax.
  - Did you picture the square? What did you notice about your breath as it moved around the square?

### ***Focused Breathing***

All the preceding exercises involve an active use of the breath: guiding or pacing movement, or governing the rhythm of the breath itself. This next exercise simply asks students to pay attention to their breath in different parts of the body. This paying attention, though, is still an active process. The shifting of attention from one part of the body to another can stimulate the child to breathe more deeply in that area or to otherwise engage muscles in that area. But the action is often subtler. In either case, the action is the student's choice.

Simply noting the breath in each of the areas, not necessarily doing anything about it, cultivates calm alertness. This alertness is the foundation of mindfulness in action.

Pauses are naturally part of all the exercises. In Focused Breathing, as in the other activities, ellipses indicate where we want to be sure to pause long enough so that students can process the instructions and notice their inner sensations . . .

- *Sample script:* Have you ever just stopped and noticed how your body is feeling? Some people do that when they lie down to sleep. They just tune in to the feelings in their bodies, whether in their hands or their feet or all over. Today we're going to stop and pay attention in a special way.

So, let's all sit comfortably, close your eyes if you like, and notice where the sensations are, anywhere in your body...

As you scan your body to feel the different sensations, one of the easiest things to notice is your breath. How does your breath feel? Just pay attention...

- **Part 1:** Now, feel the breath as it happens in your belly. Pretend that your breath is happening only there. Inhaling, imagine your belly expanding like a balloon. Exhaling, imagine the balloon collapsing slowly. You may put your hands on your belly, if you like, to feel this action...
- **Part 2:** Now, imagine that the breath is happening only in your chest. Feel your ribcage expand as you breathe in, and sink back as you breathe out, pretending that the breath is only in your chest...
- **Part 3:** Now, focus on the movement of the breath in your throat. Feel the air move lightly through your throat as you inhale and exhale...
- **Part 4:** Next, feel the breath only in your nostrils – without a sound – like a soft breeze over the hillside. Just notice the breath as it moves in and out of your nostrils...
- **Part 5:** Finally, feel the breath at the point between the eyebrows. As the breath enters your nostrils, imagine the air softly moving up to the point between the eyebrows, emanating from there as you exhale...

## Reflection

*After every mindful moment, we reflect briefly with the students on their experience. This helps them develop awareness of their somas and how they are affected by conscious breathing. This helps build self-awareness, and other-awareness, too, as they listen to others' experiences. They may also have valuable feedback on what they liked or disliked.*

*We recommend using brief, simple prompts. Start with questions such as these, and let your repertoire evolve over time:*

“What did you notice?”

“If you could choose one word to describe how you felt, what word would you say?”

“How does this feel compared to other moves we've done?”

“How was this different from what we did earlier?”

## Delivery

*One of the primary goals in mindfulness instruction is to feel comfortable with both the technique and the way you present it. Key to a successful Mindful Moment is the non-verbal part of the delivery, the musicality of your presentation. The following rubrics suggest how to make your instruction a mindful practice, one more way to notice how calm and focused you can be.*

- **Pace**  
Somatic tempo – slow enough for students to absorb the words, to process their meaning, to do the exercise, and to notice its effects. This includes pausing between instructions. Silence can indeed be golden.
- **Tone**  
Pleasant & smooth – loud enough to be heard, gentle enough to be calming.
- **Clarity**  
Let your words be simple, salient, enunciated.

## RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

### *Structure of a Mindful Moment*

- Open with an attention-getting question, image, or fact. Introduce the exercise by name. Include a word about mindfulness or relaxation.
- Lead the selected exercise, referring to script as necessary.
- Reflect on experience, taking at least one student's comment. Sample prompts:
  - "What did you notice?"
  - "How do you feel?"
  - "If there were one word to describe what you noticed, what would that word be?"

### *Frequency and Time*

- Three exercises each day, as appropriate (e.g., classroom transition time)
- Each exercise can take 2-3 minutes, including:
  - 30 seconds for silent sensing
  - 30 seconds for reflection

### *Sequence and Selection of Exercises*

- Begin, in week 1, by following the sequence in the manual, introducing each exercise in its separate parts in order. Reflect with students on their experiences and any results they may have noticed in activity (e.g., feeling calmer while playing sports, more focus when reading, etc.).
- Then, in week 2, repeat the sequence of exercises.
- Reflect again with students on their experiences and observations. Ask them which exercises they found most interesting or valuable. Ascertain, too, whether there are points of confusion about any of the practices. Which ones are they most interested in repeating?
- In subsequent sessions, select exercises according to students' suggestions and requests, as well as your own sense of what might be useful at a particular time.

Continue reflecting with students from time to time. Invite their elaborations, even additional exercises that they suggest or request. Listen for, and ask about, their observations of increased mindfulness, relaxation, and clarity of mind in their day. Notice how students tie their mindfulness practice to class work and their relations with each other.

We look forward to hearing your observations and reflections!

**SCHEDULE OF EXERCISES – SAMPLE CALENDAR**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>
1	1	Shoulder release 1 (Both shoulders together)	Shoulder release 2 (One shoulder at a time)	Neck release (Rotation; Forward & back; Side to side)
	2	Foot release (Lifting ball of foot; lifting heel)	Breathing tall (Lengthening the spine)	Rising mountain (Arms rise; forward bend)
	3	Breathing deeply 1 (Belly)	Breathing deeply 2 (Belly & ribs)	Breathing deeply 3 (Belly, ribs & collar bone)
	4	Square breathing 1 (Inhale 4, Exhale 4)	Focused breathing 1 (In the belly)	Focused breathing 2 (In the chest)
	5	Focused breathing 3 (In the throat)	Focused breathing 4 (In the nostrils)	Focused breathing 5 (Between the eyebrows)
2	6	Shoulder 1-2	Neck	Foot
	7	Breathing tall	Rising mountain	Breathing deeply 1-3
	8	Square breathing 1	Focused breathing 1-5	Shoulder 1-2
	9	Neck 1-3	Foot	Breathing tall
	10	Rising mountain	Breathing deeply 1-3	Square breathing
3 – end	11 – end	Student/teacher choice		

## **Contact Information**

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Stuart Moody, M.A., counseling psychology, holds certifications in Somatic Yoga, Ananda Yoga, and Education Through Movement. He has taught yoga for over 35 years to children and families, college students, classroom teachers, prison inmates, and older adults. Since 1995, he has provided classes and workshops to hundreds of elementary and pre-service teachers in PE, dance, and somatics.

Stuart is a member of the Contemplative Traditions Working Group at the University of Arizona and chairs the mindfulness committee of UA's Healthiest Campus Coalition. He is also Trainer for the Mindful Ambassadors of Campus Health, a program that he co-founded in 2015. Stuart served on the Standards Advisory Committee of the Yoga Alliance and is program director of Green Sangha, a mindfulness-based environmental action group.

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