

# 9 tips to Mindfulness for the Holidays and New Year

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In the hustle and bustle, as we approach the end of the year and holiday season, it's easy to become overwhelmed by work demands on top of planning, shopping, and socializing. However, by incorporating mindfulness into your holiday routines, you can create small but more meaningful and joyous moments for yourself and your loved ones.

Here is a glimpse into some strategies you can learn for this holiday season!

## Mindful Breating

Before the day kicks off, spend a few minutes focusing solely on your breath. Observe the rise and fall of your chest, the sensation of air entering and leaving your nostrils.

## Walking Meditation

Walking in the snow or a nearby Winter Wonderland can bring you a lot of peace and quiet. Remember to notice the sensation of your feet touching the ground and the rhythm of your steps.

## Mindful Eating

It can be hard to practice this (especially during the holidays), but try to pay attention to the taste, texture, and aroma for just one meal a day, even if it's just a quick snack.

## Body Scan

At the end of the day when the festivities are done, lie down and mentally scan your body from head to toe, observing any tension or discomfort and letting the day go.

## Guided Meditations

Use apps or online programs like Starling Minds and gain access to guided mindfulness and meditation sessions. It may take a bit of time to get used to this practice, but your body will learn to feel less anxious with mindfulness.



As the new year approaches, remember to revisit or build new strategies into your daily routine to help you ring in the new year with a greater sense of intention and motivation.

## Here are some simple strategies we hope you can take into the new year.

### Stepping out of autopilot

Meditate and set an intention for the day, and change up your everyday routine.

### Expansion Strategies

One helpful thing we can do in moments of difficulty is to practice expansion. This is a way to step out of autopilot and reconnect with the present moment. There are three steps: Acknowledge the way your body feels, gather your thoughts by bringing full attention to your breath, and expand your awareness around the breathing to the whole body.

### Try the 5-minute rule

A simple and effective technique to overcome procrastination, increase motivation, and initiate change. The idea is to commit to working on a task or goal for just five minutes as oftentimes, the most challenging part of any task is getting started. Try by choosing a task or goal, set a timer for 5 minutes, start and work, and evaluate and decide whether to continue or not.

### R.A.I.N. technique

A tool for practicing mindfulness when we feel overwhelmed by our thoughts and emotions. *Recognize (R)* what was happening inside of you – the circling of anxious and intrusive thoughts and guilty feelings. *Allow (A)* what is happening by breathing and letting it be. Even though you may not like what you are feeling, the intention is *not* to fix or change anything, and *not* to judge yourself for feeling anxious or guilty. *Investigate (I)* what felt most difficult such as feelings of anxiety in your body – physical tightness, pulling and pressure around my heart. *Nurture (N)*, nurturing that part of you that feels anxious. Talking to the part of yourself with love and kindness.



Incorporating mindfulness into your holiday routines, you can create small but more meaningful and joyous moments for yourself and your loved ones.

## Feeling stressed?

Discover [Starling Mental Fitness](#), a 24/7, confidential digital mental health program with check-ups, guided training sessions, mindfulness exercises, and a supportive community to help you overcome feelings of stress, anxiety, burnout and depression. It's free for OTIP members and family members (16+ years old).

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