

Managing Stress during COVID: Mindfulness and More

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How I got here:

- Intuitive meditative practices
- Performance anxiety management
- NASM and Koru training



The building blocks

...and they work *together*

It may seem boring, but:

- Sleep
- Meals
- Exercise
- Gratitude
- Connection
- = Structure during chaos

Sleep Hygiene

Quiet, dark, cool

7-9 hours, every night

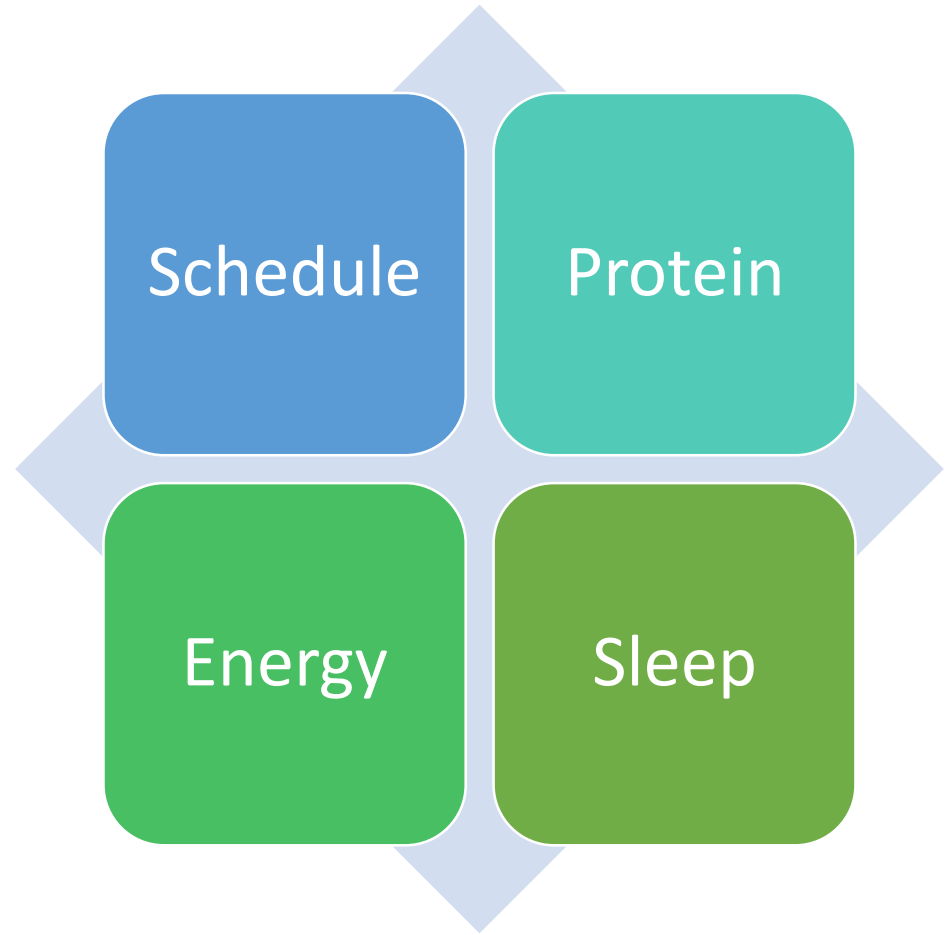
Naps: how long

Do not disturb

Food & drink

OTC meds

Meals
&
Hydration



More thoughts on nutrition



Food versus
“food-like”



Eat this, not that



Drinking calories



Not expensive



Start with
protein



My Fitness Pal

Exercise in the Year of Cortisol

30 min.

Do it first

Mix it up

Adriene!



Gratitude

A single act can produce:

- Immediate 10% increase in happiness
- 35% fewer depressive symptoms
- Increases optimism (boosts immune system)



PHYSICALLY distance!

Virtual dinner party

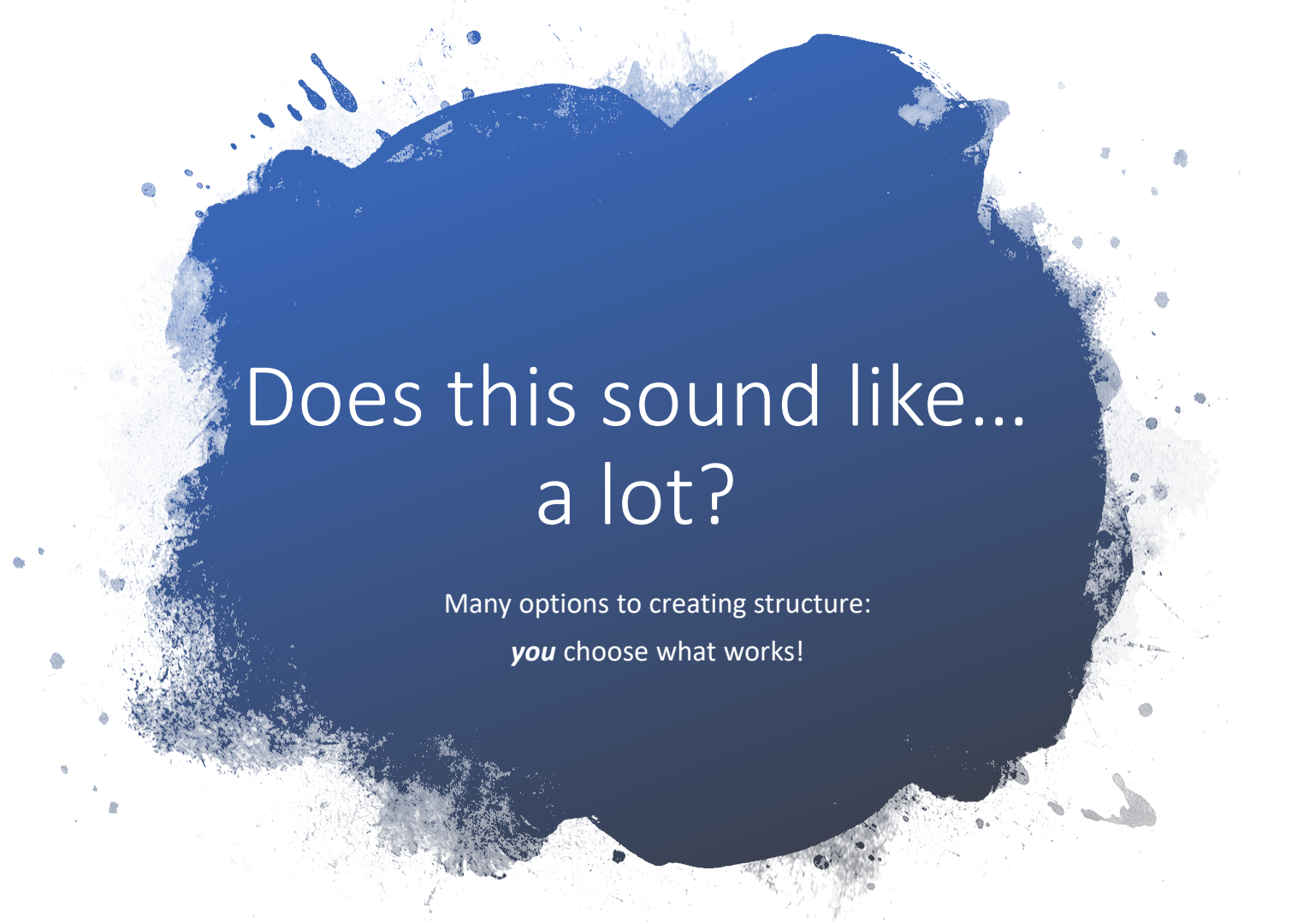
Coloring online

Gratitude group

Exercise together

Online book clubs

Snail mail



Does this sound like...
a lot?

Many options to creating structure:
you choose what works!



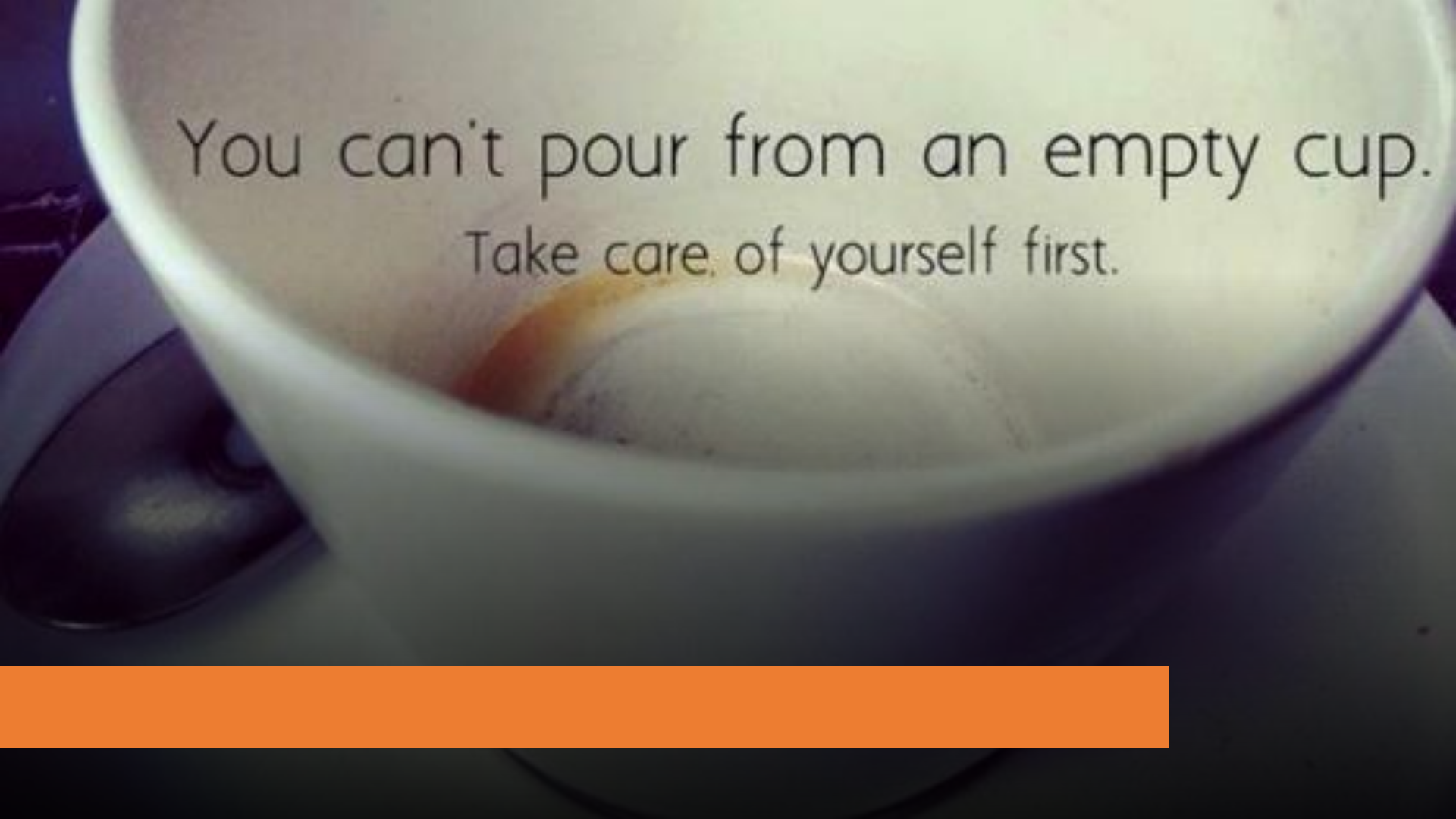
Formal and informal practices

Formal = meditation

Informal = soothing self-care behaviors

Speaking of formal practice...



A close-up photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup. Inside the cup, a tea bag is visible, and a slice of lemon is floating on the surface. The cup is placed on a dark-colored saucer. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the cup is a quote in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

You can't pour from an empty cup.
Take care of yourself first.

Have you ever said to yourself:

NO PAIN - NO GAIN

Let's revisit societal programming

Virtuous (adj.):

having or showing high moral standards.



Speaking of virtuous...





Koru Mindfulness

Developed by Duke University

Focus = emerging adults

Change, exploration, uncertainty, struggle

Issues of identity and authenticity

Two-year certification period



Mindfulness meditation...

is a form of rest (it also boosts productivity)

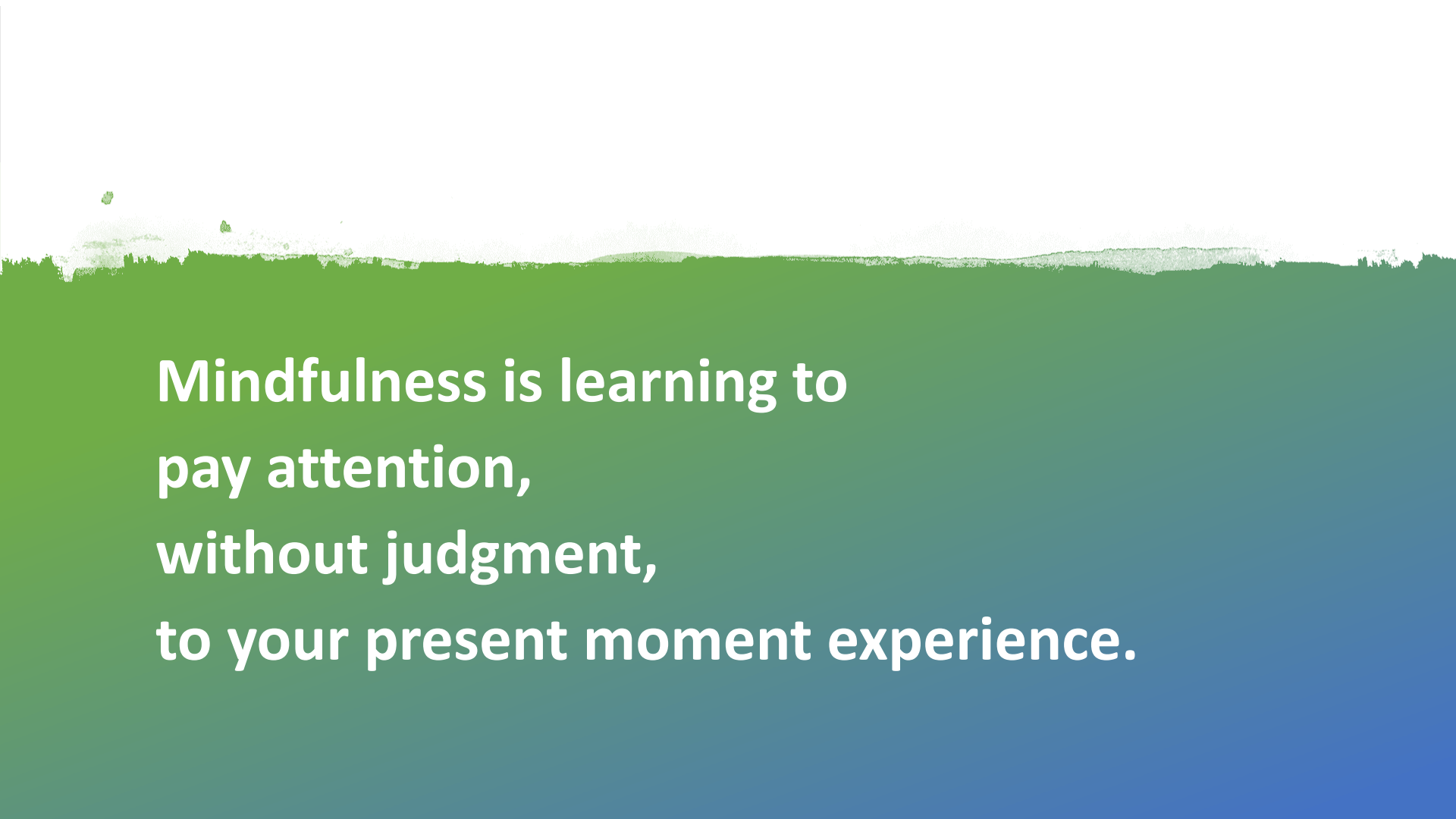
is way to live more fully in the present

develops the observing mind, the state of consciousness that allows us to have a broader, more grounded perspective on our life experiences.

- Meditation is *one* path to living mindfully: there are many!

Meditation...


- IS NOT a religion, nor must you practice one to do it
- IS NOT the suppression of all thoughts
- IS NOT just for the enlightened or talented
- IS NOT terribly time-consuming
- IS learnable, by anyone
- IS a process, not a product

A landscape photograph showing a green field in the foreground and a blue sky with some clouds in the background. The text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

**Mindfulness is learning to
pay attention,
without judgment,
to your present moment experience.**



So, if life is a river...

A person wearing a grey helmet and a black life vest is kayaking on a river. The kayak is red and has a white logo on the side. The person is holding a yellow paddle and is in the middle of a stroke. The water is turbulent with white water rapids. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

...mindfulness
is your boat.



Thoughts = river...

A scenic landscape of a lake surrounded by forested mountains under a blue sky with clouds. The water is dark blue with ripples, and the mountains are covered in dense green forest. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner.

Another metaphor



Like music...

We call it a “practice” for a reason.

Unlike music, however...



Yet another metaphor
(*why* go to the gym? How much to lift?)

Benefits are cumulative

- Stimulates parasympathetic nervous system = stress reduction
- Respiration slows, deepens
- Heart rate & blood pressure decrease
- Digestion improves; effective eating disorder treatment
- Heart disease risk decreases as anxiety is reduced
- Amygdala shrinks; hippocampus thickens
- Better concentration and memory recall
- Improved sleep

Awareness vs. judgment

- ✧ One of the principal tenets of meditation
- ✧ Opens space for growth and change
- ✧ Allows for true, open learning



Koru Skills

- Basic meditation: deep breathing
- Body scan (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Labeling and releasing of thoughts / feelings
- Creative visualization or guided meditation
- Energy-building exercises (dynamic breathing)
- Walking meditation
- Eating meditation
- Meditation poem (Gatha)



Guidelines

- Find a comfortable space / position
- Use an ambient sound if you wish
- Have timer or app to signal ending
- Anchor: breath, counting, etc.
- Release expectations

One more time



Common challenges



Discomfort or pain



The “thinking” mind



Impatience



“Goals”



Acceptance (vs. resignation)



Judgment



Procrastination

Sources

Wherever You Go, There You Are: Jon Kabat-Zinn

The Mindful Twenty-Something: Holly Rogers

Emerging Adulthood: Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

Mindset: Carol Dweck

Grit: Angela Duckworth

Brain Rules: John Medina

Full Catastrophe Living: Jon Kabat-Zinn

The average
cup...



...can grow
over time!





Favorite Meditation Apps

Insight Timer

Simple Habit

Koru

Balance

10% Happier

Shine

Some online sources

Feastforthesoul.org

Rickhanson.net

Korumindfulness.org

Self-compassion.org

An ongoing conversation

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Email me with comments and to ask questions!