

Mindfulness Boasts Big Benefits

The Power of Presence in the Face of Uncertainty

Thousands of Americans are working long, extended hours and risking their own health working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Others are navigating the newness of working from home. The uncertainty the virus brings, the risk of being exposed and the challenges of balancing home and work are creating extreme levels of anxiety and stress for some.

One of the ways to help manage the stress is to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is a type of meditation where individuals take in moment-to-moment experiences as they come. It's about noticing your thoughts and feelings, without judgment and without reacting to them.

Mindfulness practices won't stop the spread of COVID-19. They won't make groceries (or toilet paper) appear on shelves in local supermarkets. And they won't give you the hug you need during a time of social distancing. But they can help in three important ways.



Benefit #1

Better stress management

Not surprisingly, stress is often amplified by work-related pressures—overwhelming workloads, long hours and not taking enough mental breaks. Nearly 80% of Americans say they experience stress during their daily lives, and that's during normal times.

It's not always possible to slow down or take a break at work. But research does show that incorporating mindfulness techniques can have a positive influence on stress. Encourage your colleagues and direct reports to do so as much as possible.



Benefit #2

Improved mental and physical health

Along with an impact on stress levels, mindfulness can have a positive effect on other physical and mental health areas. Mindfulness techniques have been used to help:

- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce chronic pain
- Improve sleep
- Boost the immune system

Mindfulness combined with traditional therapies can benefit conditions including:

- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Anxiety
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder



Benefit #3

Enhanced focus, memory and thinking skills

It's important to maintain the mental strength and resiliency needed to handle the unique situations employees are facing during this pandemic.

A main goal of mindfulness is to remain focused on the present and attempt to free our minds from past events or anxieties about the future. Practicing mindfulness helps achieve this and improves other cognitive functions, such as:

- Learning
- Attention
- Problem-solving
- Decision-making

Particularly in a time like this, team members' ability to disconnect and recharge is critical when it comes to how they view work environments and feel as employees.