



FOOTPATH FOUNDATION

Outside Discovering Me! - Mindful Hikes

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is taking notice of how your body feels and what your mind is doing right now. When we notice what is happening around us, we are able to focus. When we focus, we can feel calm even when we are frustrated, nervous, or overwhelmed. Practicing mindfulness means we breathe deeply and tune into our five most important senses.

Hiking in nature is a great way to achieve calm. When we focus on our senses during a nature hike, the hike turns into a mindful activity. Take a hike and try the mindful activities provided to achieve calm and help you focus.

Through Footpath Foundation's programming, we have found that hiking in nature has a significant positive impact on children's and adult's ability to achieve a sense of calm and well-being. We know that spending just ten minutes in green space can reduce stress and anxiety. Pairing a nature hike with mindfulness is healthy for the mind and body.

A MINDFUL BREATH

Mindfulness activities allow us to focus and feel calm. Taking deep breaths is an important part of mindfulness. Deep breathing increases oxygen to our brain and stimulates our nervous system resulting in a state of calm for our body and mind. Follow these steps to taking a deep, mindful breath.

- Imagine there is balloon inside your chest. Place one hand on your mid-section and one hand on your chest.
- Slowly take a deep breath IN, filling up your balloon. Focus on the hand resting on your chest as you fill your balloon. When your balloon is full this hand should be higher than the hand on your midsection.
- Hold the breath for a count of three.
- Slowly blow out the air like a steady stream of wind.
- Continue mindful breathing for ten minutes. If thoughts enter your mind during your breathing, acknowledge them and let them go.

How do you feel? Calm and relaxed?





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OUTDOOR MINDFUL ACTIVITIES USING OUR SENSES

- Find a spot to sit, take three deep breaths, close your eyes, and focus on your sense of hearing and smell. Tune in to the sounds and smells of the forest. What do you hear? What do you smell? If thoughts drift into your mind, notice them, and then let them go. How do you feel?
- As you hike through nature, focus on your sense of touch. What does the ground feel like under your feet? Touch the tree bark, feel the soft leaves, hold a cool rock in your hand. Really focus on these sensations and practice deep breathing. If thoughts drift into your mind, notice them, and then let them go. How do you feel?
- Take a noticing hike. While on your hike, look closely at what you see around you. Do you see a mushroom growing at the base of a tree, a chipmunk scurrying in the undergrowth, or a spider web spun between the branches of a tree? Tune out your other senses and really take notice of the natural world around you.

PICK A TRAIL TO HIKE AND TRY THE MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES
TO ACHIEVE A GREATER SENSE OF CALM!

CLEVELAND METROPARKS

The Cleveland Metroparks is commonly referred to as the emerald necklace of the Greater Cleveland area. Consisting of 18 park reservations and boasting over 300 miles of recreational trails, the park system spans over 23,700 acres of natural beauty. The Cleveland Metroparks has a multitude of trails for people of all skills, interests, and abilities. Check out the link below for a list of hiking trails within the Cleveland Metroparks.

<https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/parks/visit/activities/event-activity-types/hiking-walking>

RAILS TO TRAILS CONSERVANCY

Rails to Trails Conservancy is a nationwide non-profit with a mission *'to create a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines, connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people'*. RTC accomplishes their goal by creating multipurpose trails for public use from former railroad lines. These types of paths are flat or gently sloping making them an ideal outdoor choice for people of all ages and abilities. The paths and trails developed by RTC are handicapped accessible. RTC provides a list of all trails near a location of your choosing from their website.

<https://www.trailink.com>

