



Mindfulness at Work: *The Secret to Productivity and Reduced Stress*

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Mindfulness at Work: The Secret to Productivity and Reduced Stress



What is mindfulness and why do you care? Most importantly, can you do it in the middle of a busy life? Can you practice mindfulness at work?

Mindfulness is an ancient tradition that's all the rage now. Time magazine's cover promoted it last year and [Harvard Business Review](#) regularly promotes it to their busy executive readership. Why?

Essentially, mindfulness is like taking your brain and brain-body-stress connection to the gym to strengthen the neuro-connections

that can calm down your stress. The more we learn about stress and the brain, the more we learn that we can interrupt the stress response hormones that most of us have habitually turned to “high.” It’s become a habit to believe that stress is necessary to our success, but this isn’t the case. In fact, we’re learning that stress actually dampens our ability to be creative and resourceful – to meet a deadline or develop a brilliant solution to an intractable problem.

How does mindfulness calm down your stress?

When you have a stressful event in your life, your brain-body stress-response system clicks on. This often happens during (or before) your morning commute.

Don’t confuse the value of focus for the value of stress in achieving success.

Ever come back from a relaxing lunch and go on alert again the minute your email comes up? That lunch was relaxing, but it wasn’t mindful.

For the vast majority of us, the stress spigot doesn’t get turned off with intentional mindfulness, and every little thing just piles onto it. Even when we’re calm, this stress ball of habitual tension and anxiety lurks just below the surface so it just takes a small thing (like that giant list of emails!) to light it all up again.

Mindfulness at work not only calms you down in the moment, but – very importantly – **when regularly practiced**, it builds up an alternative neural network of mind-body connection that begins to invoke itself under stress circumstances. When you’re practiced at mindfulness, you develop the ability to notice a stress response beginning and interrupt the cycle. This gives you greater control over whether and how you respond.

How do I do it?

Does a mindfulness practice always have to include meditation?

Nope. You can practice mindfulness on your morning commute or cleaning the house. There is no end of ways to practice and none of them are difficult, but they do take focus and commitment. A few minutes a day – every day – will produce results in reduced stress and greater focus and productivity.

The trick? You have to actually. Be. Mindful.

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