

Finding Your **Calm**



**Activities to help you
learn mindfulness,
meditation, and
positivity**

What is “your calm?”

What does calm mean to you? Relaxed? Quiet? Anxiety-free? Peaceful? Stress-free?

This activity book goes through some of the most effective ways to help you find your calm, whatever that might be.

As you go through these activities, be positive and open-minded, even if you're skeptical about this meditation and mindfulness stuff. Anything that will help you relax and deal with stress is worth a try!

What do you do to help you feel calm? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> listen to soft music | <input type="checkbox"/> take a walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> read a book | <input type="checkbox"/> play with a pet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sit in my room | <input type="checkbox"/> take a bath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> watch TV | <input type="checkbox"/> be in nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Use deep breathing and visualization to find calm.

Deep breathing

Find a comfortable place to sit, close your eyes, and relax your body. Breathe in deeply, and slowly count to four. On four, slowly release your breath. Then repeat. *Deep breathing is an easy, effective way to help you feel calm and relaxed.*

Visualization

Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene, adding as many details as you can. Even better, pair your visualization with deep breathing.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is simply making the effort to notice things that you wouldn't normally pay attention to. When you aren't mindful, you're basically on auto-pilot, letting the chaos of the outside world and your own worries and fears guide your emotions.

You can practice mindfulness by “targeting” your attention. For example, when you're walking outside, pay attention to things you don't normally notice—the sounds you hear, the scenery, the people and buildings you pass.

Being mindful is also about paying attention to how you feel.

Try this. Close your eyes and clear your mind. Take several deep breaths and focus on your mind and body. Think about how you're feeling.

What did you notice about how you're feeling, physically and mentally?

Being mindful can help you be more aware, feel calmer, and be more in the moment—and it's something you get better at with practice. Remind yourself to be “in the now” and to be fully present throughout the day, in and out of class, with others, and alone.

Try meditation.

Meditation can help you find calm and feel more centered and grounded. And the best part? Anyone can meditate.

You can meditate by sitting quietly and listening to your breathing, or by going for a walk, taking some deep breaths, and noticing what you see, feel, and hear. You can also try a guided meditation app, like Calm, or stream guided meditations on Spotify or YouTube. *Find what works best for you!*

For some calming techniques, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

Gratitude

Research shows that people who make an effort to be more grateful sleep better, are less stressed, and experience fewer health problems. Taking small moments every day to be grateful can go a long way in improving your mood and overall well-being.

What are three things you're grateful for right now?

Write a thank you letter.

Think of someone to whom you are grateful. Write a thank you letter to them (even if they never see it) telling them how they have positively affected your life.

For more, watch this quick video.



Challenging Negativity

Everyone falls victim to negative thinking from time to time, especially when the world seems stressful and chaotic. For example, we have all done the following:

- ▶ anticipated the worst (*"I know I won't make the soccer team."*)
- ▶ blamed ourselves (*"It's probably my fault he's upset."*)
- ▶ fixated on the downside of things (*"It's raining. Our plans are ruined."*)

Regularly doing these things can create a pattern of negative thinking that can affect your mental health, and even your success in life.

So what's the key to challenging negativity and being more positive?

Know that while you don't always have control over the things that happen, you do have control over how you react to them—which means that you can choose to react to things in a positive way.

Challenge your negative thoughts.

In the grid below, write down two difficult or disappointing situations you've experienced. Then write down a negative and a positive way to think about each.

Situation	Negative Thinking	Positive Thinking
Example I got a low grade on a test.	I'm not smart. I will never understand this stuff.	I started studying too late. I'll start studying earlier next time so I can get a better grade.

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion, unlike self-esteem, is more than accepting or even liking yourself. It means being kind to yourself and treating yourself with the same compassion and love you'd treat a best friend.

Rate your self-compassion.

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you avoid criticizing yourself when you make a mistake? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | When you're stressed, do you take time to relax/recharge? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you accept that you're not perfect? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you patient with yourself when you're learning something new? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you treat your own feelings with the same patience and love with which you treat your best friend's feelings? |

Give yourself 1 point for every "Yes." Your Score _____

4-5 points: You're taking good care of yourself. Keep it up!

2-3 points: Try to show yourself a little more compassion.

0-1 point: Go easier on yourself! Treat yourself more like you'd treat a friend or family member.

Write a note to yourself.

In your note, include some kind, encouraging words—words that will lift you up and make your day better.

Wellness

You take care of your physical health by eating healthy, exercising, and going to the doctor. But wellness means more than taking care of your physical health. It also means taking time for mindfulness and relaxation. It's doing things that help you stay calm, happy, and healthy—things like meditating, yoga, and journaling. *To keep you feeling your best, schedule at least one physical and/or mental wellness activity every day.*

Schedule your wellness activities.

Write a physical or mental wellness activity for each day in the boxes below. Also write down the approximate times you plan to do them.

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Positive Affirmations

What is a positive affirmation?

A positive affirmation is simply a short phrase you repeat to yourself that brings you to a place of calm. You can use your affirmation when you're feeling stressed, upset, distracted, or when you're meditating or practicing mindfulness. Here are some examples.

I am enough. I am doing my best. I can do this.

I am grateful. I believe in me. I am strong.

I am in charge. I am calm. I can rise above.

I am proud of myself. I am lovable and capable.

I am not afraid. I can take care of myself.

I don't need to be perfect. I am beautiful.

Which of these affirmations resonate with you?

Choose at least one affirmation that is meaningful to you. Write it below, say it in your mind, and keep it with you. If none of the above affirmations speak to you, write one of your own.

“Make your heart like a lake with a calm, still surface and great depths of kindness.” Lao Tzu