

#EcoSchoolsAtHome

Mindfulness Minutes



**Together we can achieve 1,000,000
minutes of mindfulness**

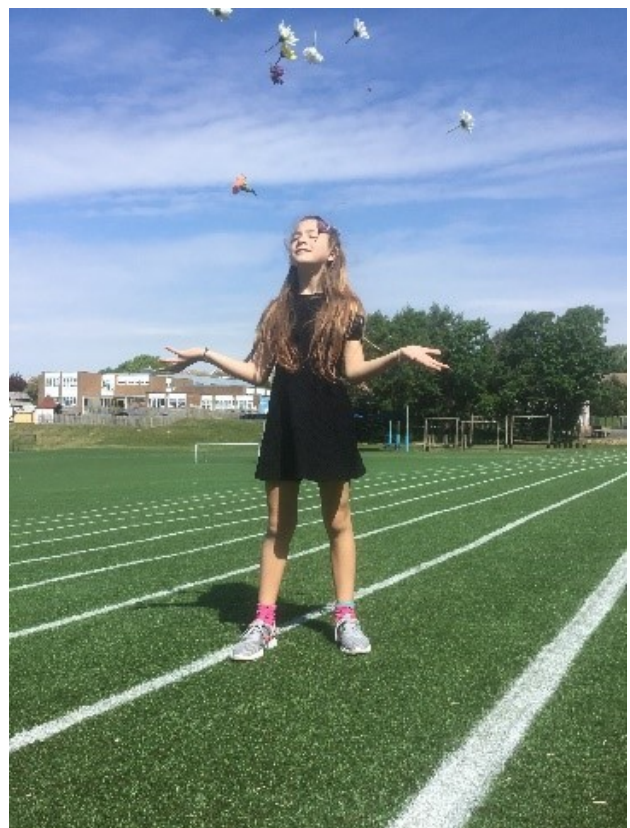
Due to popular demand and on behalf of all our Eco-Schools in England we would like to invite families, youth groups and partner organisations from around the world to join our #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes mental health and well being campaign.

More than ever before, this past year has shown us how important our mental health and wellbeing are and although we can not always be together in person- united by our determination to support our children and hard working school staff we aim to achieve one million minutes of mindfulness practice before 30th June 2021 as we relaunch our already successful Mindfulness Minutes school campaign.

Using this handout as a guide we will show families how to carry out and record simple mindfulness practices over four weeks whilst our (amazing) Eco-School staff and pupils take on the same mindfulness campaign in school across their subject and year bubbles, online assemblies and even during lunch breaks.

Let's stay strong, let's stay focused and let's continue to make a difference no matter what challenges we may face.

We are here for each other with #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes.



What's it all about?

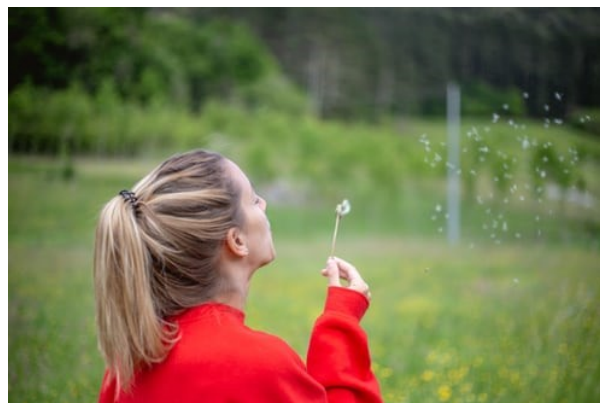
The #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes campaign is a family friendly version of our existing school eco-project [Mindfulness Minutes](#)- that has been running now for several years. By taking part you and your family will be helping your child's nursery, school or college work towards their international Eco-Schools Green Flag whilst helping all 20,000 Eco-Schools in England collectively reach one million minutes of mindfulness in 2021. In an attempt to show how important mental health and well being education is both in school and at home.

This guide contains ideas for mindfulness practice for teenagers and primary and pre-school children. It also contains a simple parent daily mindfulness set of tasks to try out whilst working from home and a few longer family mindfulness ideas. Mix and match to find which work best for you.

So what is mindfulness?

Many of us live our lives rushing through the day, blink and it's the end of the week. Life is happening, but we may not notice due to everything else that is going on in our surroundings. Mindfulness has many definitions, but simply it means being more aware of what is going on around us and learning from what we find. To do this we need to pay full attention to all our senses, rather than getting swept up in life and our daily routine.

**Quick Task: Stop reading now. Close your eyes and count 5 deep breaths.
Well done that was first hand experience of mindfulness, easy!**



When is the best time to carry out mindfulness?

Simple, any time! On the following pages there are lots of different tasks that can be carried out as and when you think best for your family. Regardless of age, a great time to carry out some mindfulness reflection is just before going to sleep– this helps clear your mind and is a great way to appreciate the ‘little wins’ you have achieved during the day.

All we ask is that you keep a record of your weekly total of mindfulness using the tally charts at the back of this guide and submit your total number of mindfulness minutes from across the four weeks to us at Eco-Schools before 30th June 2021.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MMHome

Do we have to do all four weeks of mindfulness to take part?

Not at all, any amount of mindfulness practice you and your family can commit to is great. We have suggested four weeks as this is what our Eco-Schools who have previously taken part in the campaign, have advised us was a suitable amount of time to start to appreciate the positive effects of mindfulness practice. When you submit your mindfulness minutes totals to us you will be able to do so weekly so don't worry if you only take part in #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes for two or even one week; every minute added helps us reach our target of one million minutes!

How many minutes of mindfulness should we do?

2– 10 minutes is a good length of time, lots of short mindfulness tasks throughout the day work best, especially if mindfulness is new to you and your family. *Please note our early years mindfulness tasks are designed to be shorter to help keep little ones interested.*

Where should we carry out mindfulness?

The great thing about mindfulness activities are that they can be carried out anywhere outside or inside. Any spare minute is the perfect time to be mindful—just make sure to record them all!

How mindful are we?

Before taking part in #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes you and your family may want to carry out our short mindfulness review. The review below is suitable for both adults and children alike.

Question	Yes	No
When I'm walking I take time to appreciate the nature I pass.		
When I eat I take time to think about the different tastes and textures of the food instead of just eating quickly .		
I notice what my body feels like when I am upset or angry.		
I am happy to just sit down and relax without a mobile phone or any form of electronics.		
I think about the good things that have happened during the day before I go to sleep.		
I listen to what I can hear during lunch breaks.		
I try not to worry too much about things that I can't control.		
When possible I look around me and notice even the smallest changes to my surroundings		
When family talk to me I think about nothing else and concentrate on them.		
After an argument, I find it easy to put the fall out behind me and be friends again.		
I am patient with my family and friends.		
If I make a mistake in my work I learn from it and move on quickly.		
I often take a few minutes to just stop and think.		
I regularly take the time to stop and think about how amazing nature is.		
I remember to focus on each of my five senses at some point everyday.		

Mindfulness Review Scores

Give one point for every 'Yes' ticked

Score 0-5 Mindfulness Newbie You are probably not thinking about what is going on around you and could be missing out on lots of exciting things - don't worry #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes will help you with this.

Score 6-12 Mindfulness Mostly: You do have some moments of mindfulness during your day, great! You're well on your way to becoming a Mindfulness Jedi.

Score 12-13 Mindfulness Jedi: Wow, you are taking the time to appreciate everything going on around you, spread the word and help others become as mindfully magnificent as you.



Repeat

At the end of your four weeks of mindfulness practice we strongly recommend that you and your family complete a second mindfulness review to evaluate the success of your practice and help you decide if you wish to carry on being mindful (even if just for 2 minutes everyday)

Don't worry you do not need to send the results of your mindfulness review(s) to Eco-Schools, this is just to help you realise the impact of your practice... and perhaps help you decide to continue your family mindfulness.

What are we going to do during our mindfulness minutes?

This is the best part. Easy, absolutely nothing if you wish! Mindfulness can be as simple as: closing your eyes and listening to the noises around you or looking out of a window and watching the world go by. There are no rules to mindfulness - just stop and notice what is happening.

At first you might find it difficult to 'clear your mind' and 'stop thinking,' as thoughts try to hijack your brain. But the great thing about mindfulness is it's impossible to do it wrong and it doesn't judge you, simple refocus and start again. The aim of mindfulness is not to feel better but to get better at feeling.

Being mindful does not mean you have to sit in the lotus position for hours (but you can if you want) it is simply acknowledging what is happening right now and learning from it. Slowly, you will start to find it easier to become more mindful and learn to appreciate small things around you. Mindfulness is a great skill to have no matter your age, especially if you are finding yourself stressed at the moment and your mind is racing.

Over the next few pages there are a series of tasks to introduce mindfulness practice to yourself, teens, primary and pre-school children. These are just a few of the thousands of great mindfulness practices out there. A simple search online and you will be able to find lots more practice ideas, books, apps and even games to try out during #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes.

Please remember age does not matter when it comes to mindfulness practice all our suggested tasks are suitable for 'grown ups' even our pre schools tasks!

Young children are natural mindfulness experts they see and hear everything, they don't take themselves too seriously and they are spontaneous; maybe as adults we should be more like them!



Working from Home Mindfulness Day

Morning

Brushing your teeth: every day focus on a different sense whilst brushing your teeth. Monday taste, Tuesday smell etc.

Laptop loading: Whilst your laptop is loading, carry out a quick body scan or posture scan. How are you sat? How do your hands, feet, neck and shoulders feel? Every day you could focus on a different part of your body.

2nd drink of the morning: when you've answered a few emails and after several calls, whilst waiting for the kettle to boil carry out a quick feelings check- how are you? Stop for a few minutes and really take a break. You could focus on the taste of your drink or just gaze out of the kitchen window. This task is also a great way to make sure you hydrate!

Throughout the day (30 seconds each time)

Choose a mindfulness contact or email subject: every time you receive an email from a particular person or about a particular subject use this as a trigger to stop and take a breath, focus on your breathing and then read the email. This person is now your nominated mindfulness reminder, but don't tell them that otherwise they will either stop emailing you or email more!

Touch point object: choose a particular object that you touch throughout the day at intervals, such as a phone charger. Every time you touch this object, like the task above, use this as a reminder to take stock- check your breathing and tension levels in your body.

Afternoon

Focused lunch/ walk: firstly make sure you do take a lunch break. When you do you could carry out a mindfulness meal and focus on the tastes and textures of your lunch. Maybe a mindfulness walk focusing on sounds you hear one day or spot certain colours in nature on another. This task is great to do as a family lunch break activity.

Laptop shutting down: as in the morning carry out a posture scan- how does your body feel different from the morning when you switched on your laptop? Focus on the same area(s) of your body again, are they tenser or more relaxed?

Evening

Social scrolling: as you scan social media notice how you feel. Do other people's posts make you feel happier, sad or no feelings at all, is scrolling just filling time? When you notice how this makes you feel it is much easier to put down your mobile, or even turn it off!

Brushing your teeth: list in your head all the things that you achieved or were grateful for that day.

Bed body scan: carry out a guided body scan before sleeping to help your body relax and clear your mind. There are lots out there however this particular [15min scan](#) is very relaxing, you will be asleep before it ends!

Teens

- Take notice of your language. How often do you say 'I' or 'Me'? Notice how you talk about yourself to others, do you use positive or negative words when describing yourself? Spend a few moments listing or writing down positive things about yourself- these can be on the outside and the inside. Now put this list next to your mirror so every time you see your reflection you remember your great qualities.
- If you get sad or angry throughout the day- maybe you are struggling with a particular subject or have lots of work to catch up on. Take a few minutes to be your own best friend. Think about the advice you would offer a friend if they told you they were feeling down or stressed. Now take your own advice and be equally as kind to yourself.
- 7/11 breathing is a great technique to calm your nerves. For a few minutes as you breath in count to seven and as you breath out count to eleven. Combine this breathing exercise with visualizing yourself in your 'happy place'.
- Selfie or self- think about the situation you are in every time you go to take a selfie, how are you feeling just before? Do you start to notice any patterns of when and why you post on social media? Just before posting try one minute of mindfulness breathing- do you still want to post?
- Before going to sleep take 2 minutes to list all the positive things that have happened during your day, this can be academic or personal make this your **#dailyappreciation**



Primary

- During a week of mindfulness focus on different parts of the body.
On Monday bring full attention to your hands - how do they feel, cold or warm?
Any tingling sensations? What does the surface they are resting on feel like?
Tuesday - legs, Wednesday - back, Thursday - face, Friday - the whole body.
- On a daily walk pick an object to focus on and count how many times you see this object, such as dogs or cats. The amount of mindfulness minutes for this activity is how long your journey takes. Every week you could swap the item you are focusing on, this is also a great way to get parents involved too.
- Grow a plant and every day look at it for 1 minute to see if anything has changed.
- During a break from lessons look at the sky for a few minutes, notice the different colours that you see. Record these on a sheet of paper as a cloud chart. If you carry this out over the course of the year how do the colours on your cloud chart change?
- After sitting quietly for 2 minutes outside make a note of all the different smells, sounds and sights you see. Keep a record of this and create a Scentsation Diary. Try being mindful in different parts of your home how does your Scentsation Diary vary?

Help with homeschooling

If you are home schooling you may also want to try incorporating a little mindfulness and mental health and wellbeing practice too.

- PE: try yoga or mindfulness shadow boxing.
- SCIENCE: research the effects of mindfulness and meditation on the brain.
- COMPUTING/ MEDIA STUDIES: create a mindfulness presentation with images of nature that will help others to relax during their Mindfulness Minutes.
- MUSIC: research great composers and musicians who have created music that can help you relax- create a mindfulness playlist.
- ENGLISH: create a 'How to' set of instructions for mindfulness.
- ART: go outside and sketch or paint natural objects.
- MATHS: don't forget to calculate the total amount of mindfulness minutes carried out during February by your family!

Pre-School

- Ask your child to sit quietly for one minute and think about something that has made them happy during the day, after you have completed your minute ask them to tell others what they thought about.
- Ask your child to look at the clouds for a minute (of course, explaining not to look directly at the sun) then discuss what shapes they saw and how the clouds moved across the sky. How did looking at the clouds make them feel?
- Put a piece of fruit in a bag, ask your child to put their hands into the bag and describe what they feel without looking into the bag. Can they guess what is in the bag?
- Guide your child's breathing for a minute, ask them to put their hands on their tummy as they take deep breaths in, hold their breath and then exhale, you may even want to count their breathing in and out.
Please note there are many other simple breathing exercises available online for very young children.
- Give your child a small piece of fruit or vegetable ask them to eat it in a mindful way taking small bites, whilst asking them to think about what they are eating. Is it sweet or savoury? Does it feel nice on your tongue? Does it crunch between your teeth or is it soft?
- Walk barefoot asking them to think about how they are walking. What does the ground feel like? Is it warm or cold? Which part of their foot touches the ground first?



Family Fun

- Mindfully wash your hands– how does the water feel? How does the soap smell? How does the towel feel as you dry your hands?
- Create a family mindfulness mantra or draw a mindfulness family coat of arms showing the things that make you all happy. Put these somewhere for the whole family to see.
- Music appreciation– once a week every family member plays their favourite song to the rest of the family. Everyone closes their eyes and listens to the music (even if you don't like it very much!) How does the music make you feel? Try and tap in time to the music. Do you like fast or slow beats?
- Think of someone who you may not have spoken to for a while and write them a letter saying hello and send it to them in the post.
- Write a list of three small things that you have been putting off and as a family see if you can help each other achieve these small goals during #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes.
- Stand still for two minutes. Everyday try standing still for an extra ten seconds. Who in your family can stand still for the longest?
- Smile for thirty seconds every morning when you look in the mirror. When you see other family members smile at them too and watch the smiles spread!
- We might not be able to hug our family and friends at the moment so instead make a 'hug list' of all the people you would like to hug when its safe to do so... don't forget to let them know they are on your hugs list!
- Breath colours– when you breath in imagine a certain colour in your mind, as you breath out think of another colour. Try this several times until you have breathed all the colours of the rainbow.
- Do things the opposite way– try sleeping with your head where your feet usually are, write your name ten times with your opposite hand, wear your watch on the other wrist or swap seats on the settee or at the dining table. How does it feel to do things oppositely?
- Make an emotion diary to record how your body and mind feel when you are tired, sad or grumpy. Keep a list of the things that make you feel these emotions too, so that you can learn to recognize when you start to feel down.
- Make a laughter library and collect or list all the things that make you and your family laugh. This could be silly jokes, TV shows or podcasts– anything that's silly! Have them all ready so when a family member is feeling down they can 'borrow' something from the laughter library to make them feel better.

And finally...

Thank you very much for taking part in our new #EcoSchoolsAtHome Mindfulness Minutes campaign and supporting our schools across England to reach one million minutes of mindfulness by submitting your total number of minutes.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MMHome

Please submit before 30th June 2021

As former teachers and parents we always love to hear how you found our campaigns and celebrate the work you have carried out to support the Eco-Schools programme. So please follow and share your mindfulness fun with us on Twitter @EcoSchools or Instagram @ecoschools_england using **#EcoSchoolsAtHome #MillionMindfulnessMinutes**

If you would like to know more about the Eco-Schools national programme then head over to our [website](#) for more information

NAMASTE



Week 1	Number of Mindfulness Minutes
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Favourite mindfulness activities this week	

Week 2	Number of Mindfulness Minutes
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Favourite mindfulness activities this week	

Week 3	Number of Mindfulness Minutes
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Favourite mindfulness activities this week	

Week 4	Number of Mindfulness Minutes
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Favourite mindfulness activities this week	