

What Is Mindful Awareness?

Mindful awareness is the art of paying attention to the present moment nonjudgmentally. You know that feeling you realize you aren't in the present moment? That's awareness. Applying nonjudgment to awareness turns it into mindful awareness.



Why awareness is hard

Our brains are built for distraction.

A study in the scientific journal *Neuron* found that our attention shifts focus as much as 4 times per second.

Why is this happening? The brain naturally shifts its 'spotlight' of attention around to see if there's anything in the environment that's important to give attention to.

This evolutionary instinct comes from a time in which life was much less safe than it is today.

By being wired for distractions, your brain's trying to keep you safe. Along with the rest of us, you're battling millions of years of evolution.

How to be more aware

Mindful awareness is a skill that's easy to learn, but difficult to master.

To practice mindful awareness, simply:

1. Give your full attention to whatever it is that you're doing
2. When your attention drifts away, bring it back to the present moment

Each time you catch yourself in unawareness, you're training your mind to notice when your attention has drifted, and to bring it back.

With enough practice, your skills of attention and your ability to remain in the present moment improve.