

Maintaining a mindful life



• Tips for a mindful home

What it means to be at home can be thought about in many different ways. It can mean finding a place of peace or sanctuary, a place to be oneself, a place to feel connected and belong.

Mindfulness can be thought of in a similar way by finding those things within ourselves. Why not bring the home we live in together with the practice of mindfulness so that they foster each other? The home can help us to be mindful, and being mindful can help us to consciously shape the home we live in.

There is no better place to practice being mindful than in the home so, apart from taking some time for mindfulness meditation each day, let us consider other ways of applying mindfulness through **each** of the five senses.

Sight

Colour and form are the two main things that we experience through the eyes and light is essential for this to take place. What we can do to make the home a more mindful environment is, firstly, to sculpt the way we use light within the home. For example, invite natural light in wherever possible whether it be direct light in winter months or dappled or shaded light in summer months.

The eyes and brain need natural light. Secondly, take care in choosing the colour palette within the home. Reflect on the colours you are living with and what they communicate to you. Select colours that communicate and foster the moods and emotions you want to foster, for example, the softness of off-white for clarity, space and brightness, yellow tones for cheerfulness, green for nature and harmony, or red tones which often communicate passion and energy.

Avoid overdoing the intensity or having colours that fight with each other. Find the balance between austerity, brightness and detail that works for you.

Hearing

Between overcrowded city life, machines and information technology, we live in an increasing noisy environment and have become unfamiliar and uncomfortable with silence. In the home we can reduce the unnecessary ambient sounds by turning off the television that nobody is really watching or the radio nobody is really listening to.

It is useful to take some time to be in silence and stillness each day through meditation. It is also important to take notice of the sounds we are surrounded by and, where possible, to invite the sounds of the natural environment into the home such as the sound of the wind, falling rain, or birdsong. If that is not possible then introducing simple and restful sounds such as soothing music, wind chimes or water can help.

Notice the effect on your mind and body of the music you listen to and choose music that creates the effect you want to live with within yourself.

Touch

We, as the saying goes, 'get out of touch' when we are unmindful. Touch is a great sense to connect with. Actually take the time to connect with the things you are in touch with every day; the touch of a friend's hand when greeting them; the touch of a beautifully polished piece of timber furniture; the texture of the food you are eating; or the touch of the vegetable you are slicing.

Taking time to get in touch with the breath each day through meditation will help enormously.

Taste

We so often eat without tasting our food. Really attending to our food when eating it helps in a number of ways. Firstly it helps us to more fully enjoy the experience of eating. Secondly it helps us to make better food choices by connecting with the freshness of whole foods which are what the body would naturally choose if the mind were not so habituated to foods that are overly sweet, salty or fatty. Thirdly it helps us to sense when the body has had enough to eat and to stop before overeating.

Smell

Smell is a much underused sense. Apart from generally not smelling the foods we eat and the drinks we drink, we don't tend to invite the smells of the natural world into our homes. Fresh air is a great medium for doing that.

We can also overfill the environment with too many and too strong artificial scents - perfumes, air fresheners, scented candles - so that they fight with each other and potentially overwhelm the sense of smell. Perhaps we bombard the sense of smell sometimes because it takes a lot to wake it up. Nurture smell but don't gorge it.

These and other tips can be found in the book, [The Mindful Home by Dr Craig & Deirdre Hassed from Exisle Publishing](#).