

DO YOU EVER NOTICE THAT WHEN YOU'RE DRAWING OR MAKING SOMETHING TIME FLIES BY?

Sometimes, it is just the process of doing something creative that is enjoyable, rather than the finished result. This is what creative mindfulness is all about. Doing creative activities can really focus us on the task at hand and to stop us being so overwhelmed.

This resource will equip you with some activities to practice creative mindfulness in whatever situation you are in. You only need to spare 5 minutes for each exercise.



CREATIVE



MINDFULNESS

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

The activities in this resource will help you to practice being “mindful”. This just means paying attention to ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, and what is going on around us so that we can be in the present moment. Being in the present moment means that your head is focused on what is going on right now, rather than thinking about what happened yesterday or what you’re doing this weekend.

Being mindful helps you to focus and concentrate. Sometimes, it can help you relax. Other times, it can help you to notice if you’re worried or distracted, and to let those thoughts go.

GETTING DISTRACTED

We are so used to so much going on in our heads that being mindful takes concentration, and you will notice your thoughts drifting when you practice it. Whenever this happens, acknowledge the thoughts you are having – try to imagine you are observing them – realise that these are just thoughts, and put them aside. Use the activity you are doing as an “anchor” bringing you back to the present moment.

MINDFUL STARTERS

Before doing a creative mindfulness activity, try to relax and clear your head with one of these short mindful warm ups. You can try these at anytime to help calm yourself down, to focus, or just to have a quiet moment.



BODY SCAN

1 Take a comfortable seat and notice your thoughts right now. Put these thoughts to one side.

2 Take a deep breath, and pay attention to your body, moving from your toes to your head. Squeeze all your muscles, stretch your arms, wiggle your fingers, and relax. Sit upright and relax in posture.

3 Take a deep breath, take in everything around you, and write down:

one thing I can hear

one thing I can see

one thing I can taste

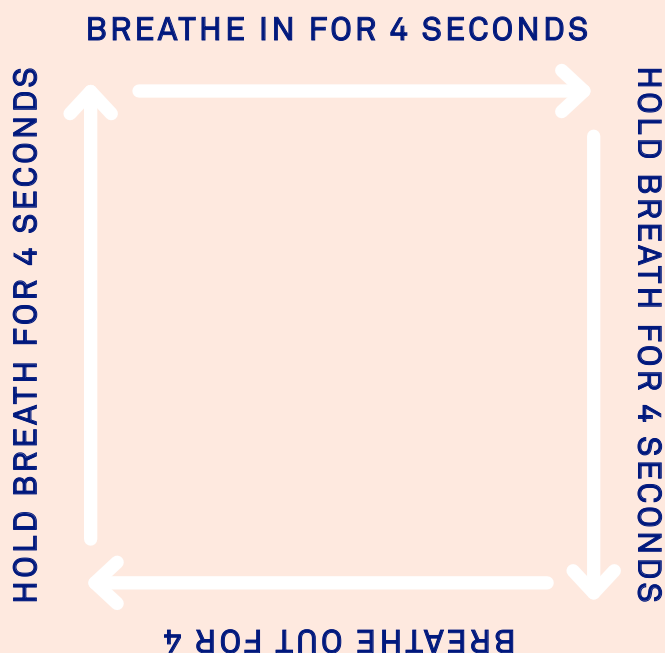
one thing I can feel

SQUARE BREATHING

1 Have a stretch, shake out your legs, and relax. Take a comfortable seat and sit upright.

2 Imagine your breath is following the shape of a square: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, and hold your breath for 4 more seconds.

Repeat 3 times.



DRAW YOUR BREATH

1 First, just take notice of your breathing. How does it feel to breath? Your lungs filling up with air, the air rushing in and out. Follow the breath's journey as it enters and leaves your body. How does breathing move your whole body? If you could see your breath, imagine the shape of it.

3 Take one breathe in and draw a line, and keep drawing as you breathe out. Continue to breathe and draw for a few minutes, letting yourself go with the flow.

2 Pick up a pen, pencil or paintbrush, and notice how it feels in your hand.

4 You can try doing this with your eyes closed to really let your breath take control!

BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING

This activity is all about looking carefully. Pick something in your house with an interesting outline, e.g. a plant, a shoe, or even a person. You're going to draw this without looking at the page and without lifting your pen. Look closely, and focus your attention on what you see in front of you.

- 1** Place your pen on your paper – take a moment to notice the feeling of it in your hand as it touches the paper.
- 2** Look only at your subject, and as you move your eye slowly around the outline of your subject's features, move your pen with it. Only look at the drawing once the minute is up.
- 3** The more you try it, the more your eye will become attuned to looking closely. In the meantime, enjoy each interesting result!
- 4** You can also try drawing with your non-dominant hand (the hand you don't write with), or looking closely and then drawing it with your eyes closed.

WRITE A RELAXING POEM

1 Find a view – this could be on your walk home, a view from your window, your favourite place, or the street you live on. The view will be your “anchor” – something that keeps you tied to the present moment.

4 Answer these questions to think about what you can see:

2 Imagine that this is going to be the first time you see this view so you can see it with fresh eyes.

3 Take a couple of minutes just to look at this view without any distractions – what can you really see?

What was the first thing you noticed once you opened your eyes?

How does this view make you feel?

What colours can you see if you look closely?
Pick your favourite.

How would you describe the elements?

What textures can you see?

What is the most interesting thing you spotted?

What is one word you would use to describe this view?

5 Write a short poem inspired by what you have seen – use your responses to these questions to guide you.

EXPERIMENTAL DOODLES

This technique is called “Entopic Graphomania” and it was created by surrealist artists – it would help them to practice looking closely to find patterns and shapes in the unexpected! There are two ways you can do this:

USING A PIECE OF PAPER:

Look closely at your piece of paper. Look for any imperfections you can see, and mark them with a dot. This might be hard to see at first, but the longer you look, the more apparent. This could be a scrunch or fold in the paper, a mark, or a blotch.

USING AN OLD NEWSPAPER:

1 Choose a letter, maybe a more unusual one like Q, and circle the letter where it appears on the page.

2 Once you’ve marked these, you’re going to join up the dots. There is no wrong way to do this. Experiment with using curved, wavy or straight lines!

3 Then, using any colour pen or pencil, start filling in the spaces between the lines. Try different techniques and marks as you go along, and when you find one you like, stick with it and just enjoy the process of filling in the blank space.



SOUND COLLAGE

There are sounds around us that we tend not to notice. In this exercise, see what you can notice when you listen carefully. It's easy to get distracted, so when this happens, just use sounds around you to refocus.

Sitting comfortably, take a minute to just sit and listen to the sounds all around you.

1 Start with the sounds that you are making, e.g. your breathing, your movements

2 Then focus on the sounds of the room you are in, e.g. creaking pipes, footsteps.

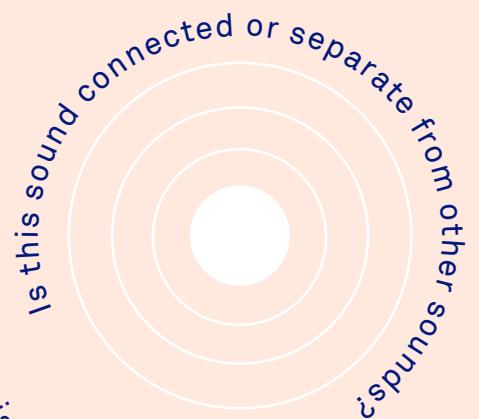
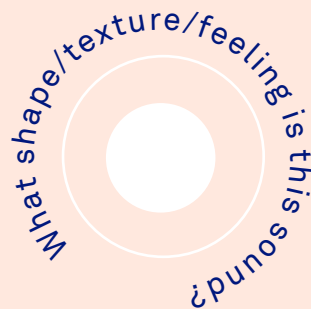
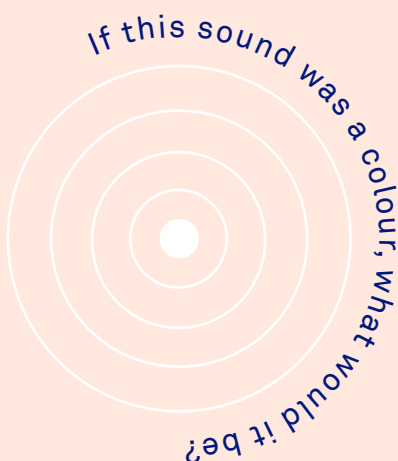
3 Finally, focus on the sounds outside the room – e.g. birds chirping, car engines.

4 On a piece of paper, put a dot in the center and imagine this is you. Around this dot, write down all of the sounds you can remember hearing; if you don't know what the sound is, write down a word describing what it sounds like, e.g. chatter, tap, bang.

5 You're going to create a Sound Collage, by making a visual representation of each sound.

6 Collage scraps from old newspapers and magazines, your own drawings, or different colour papers. Cut, rip, scrunch and tear them for different effects!

To help you represent each sound, ask yourself:



If you're struggling with how you are feeling and you need some help, these organisations can help:

Young Minds: [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

The Mix: [themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)

Childline: [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Samaritans: [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)