

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a practice that can be extremely beneficial for our mental wellbeing. Although it has been around for quite some time, it has recently received much deserved momentum. Mindfulness has the power to give us back some sense of control over our thoughts and feelings by bringing our attention to the present moment through techniques such as meditation, breathing and relaxation.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness can be broadly conceptualised as a way of calming the mind. More specifically, it encompasses a few different elements, such as:

- Being fully present. Your attention is brought to the here and now, in this moment, rather than being caught up in thoughts about the past or the future.
- Centring your thoughts. Paying attention to what's going on inside you (e.g. your thoughts, emotions, physical sensations), as well as what's going on around you, (e.g. your surroundings, other people).
- Deliberate awareness. Making a choice about where to focus your attention, rather than allowing the mind to drift wherever it wants.
- Simply noticing what you are experiencing without judging it. Acknowledging and accepting your current feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations.

What mindfulness is not?

- It's not about zoning out or going into a trance (actually, that's mindLESSness).
- It doesn't have to be done in a special place (like a meditation studio), or in a special position (like sitting crossed legged), or wearing special clothes. It can be done anywhere, anytime, by anyone.
- Despite its roots in Buddhism, it is not inherently a religious or spiritual practice.

Why practise mindfulness?

Numerous research highlights the variety of benefits that mindfulness has for both our physical and mental wellbeing. Some of these include decreased depressive symptoms, improved attention and memory function, decreased stress and anxiety, increased relaxation, increased positive feelings, better immune function, more authentic and sustainable relationships and improved sleep.

It sounds simple, but it is quite challenging for a lot of people to quieten the 'chattering' mind. So it's not always easy. Luckily, effective practice of mindfulness is not about how often the mind wanders – but the ability to notice it and then to bring it back.

In order to get the benefits of mindfulness it's suggested to be patient and to practice regularly. Just like building a muscle, the results come from regular training. Look for opportunities every day to build your mindfulness 'muscle' – even a few minutes a day can be helpful.

*For more information on our services, contact us on **02 8243 1500** or at **admin@cfch.com.au***