



# COVID-19: Feeling anxious and overwhelmed?

## Try a mindfulness break

The global pandemic weighs heavy on everyone as concerns continue about our own and our loved ones' safety. It's normal to feel distracted, lose focus and feel overwhelmed right now. No matter where you are—on the job or off—you can use a simple mindfulness technique as a convenient way to focus on the present moment and task at hand, slow down your body and mind to help you better cope with stress and feel a bit more in control of your life.

### What are the benefits?

**Studies show that practicing mindfulness on a regular basis can be profoundly relaxing.**

It reduces anxiety, helps lift moods, improves attention and performance, and increases an overall sense of well-being.

### How does it work?

**There are many ways to practice mindfulness. The simplest is to focus on your breath.**

Focusing on each inhale and exhale slows down your breathing and your heart rate, helping anxious, stressful feelings fade away. Your thinking becomes clearer. With practice, you will feel more focused, and able to withstand life's challenges a little better.

### Here's how to do it

- **Find a quiet place to sit for 5 minutes or so**, and gently close your eyes if you want.
- **Relax your stomach, shoulders and jaw** and begin to focus on your breath flowing in and out.
- **Don't force it.** If your mind wanders from your breath, bring it back by saying to yourself "I breathe in and I'm calm," and on the exhale say, "I breathe out and I let go."
- **If intrusive thoughts arise**, observe them like clouds drifting by without judgment, and return your attention to your breathing.

Additional mindfulness techniques include focusing your full attention on everyday objects like a tree, or on simple activities like eating. For example, while eating, chew each bite very slowly, noticing the textures in your mouth and the flavors bursting on your tongue.

**Remember**, Health Advocate's Licensed Professional Counselors offer confidential help and coping techniques so you can feel more calm and in control. The program is available at no cost to employees, spouses, dependents, parents and parents-in-law. **In a crisis, help is available 24/7.**

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