

Here's some common questions and statements that frequently appear regarding meditation/mindfulness

The questions/statements are:

1. **I don't have the time for mindfulness. I can do something more productive.**
2. **I'm too anxious to just sit and do nothing for 5 minutes. I can't relax!**
3. **I'm not into religious stuff - I don't want to fill my mind with eastern philosophy.**
4. **You shouldn't have to have a process to put your mind in the right state.**
5. **What's the ROI on time spent on mindfulness?**
6. **Does the effect last long enough for me to consider it beneficial?**

I don't have the time for it. I can do something more productive.

If you really want to be productive, you need three things.

Prioritisation

Focus

Energy

Without those three, you don't have productivity. In fact, life would be a big struggle. Mindfulness can help with all three of these: Big time!

Prioritisation.

This is sooooo important.

We all have hundreds of things to do.

And for most tasks, we can do one or at most two things at once, well.

(You can multi-task walking and talking, or mindful breathing and washing dishes for example - more on effective multi-tasking another time folks!)

So, the most important way of spending your decision-making power, is to prioritise.

And yes, our decision power is limited, so we need to choose how we use it wisely.

Mindfulness has been shown to strengthen [willpower](#), so you can prioritise more effectively. Rather than constantly checking your emails, you can choose to stop, breathe and think what is most important for you to do, that's in-line with your values, not just what happens to pop into your head.

[Book recommendation: 'First things First'](#) - I haven't read this one yet, but others tell me it's awesome!

Focus

How focused are you right now? Are you able to read this sentence without your mind drifting off to something else? If so, great.

Can you hold this focused attention for hours and hours? No. There's a limit.

The limit of focus has probably gone down to 30 seconds nowadays in society at large. And with technological distractions, it's shorter.

Think about it fully for a moment. Without focus, how can you get anything done? Whatever you decide to do, can't be completed.

It's like trying to read a book with a flickering light. Tiring, frustrating and very slow.

Mindfulness [rewires your brain to be better at focusing](#).

Book recommendation: [Focus](#)

Energy

You can prioritise and focus, but if you have no energy, nothing's going to happen.

What drains energy? Too much activity, poor diet, lack of exercise, lack of sleep, too much thinking.

Your brain uses up more energy than any other body part. You're thinking and worrying day and night.

In my personal experience, sometimes just one meditation can fully re-energise my brain.

And even if it doesn't, the meditation creates the probability that my next meditation will re-energise me.

So mindfulness and meditation can give you mental rest, and thereby, more energy [Here's an extract from one of my books on this](#).

I'm too anxious to just sit and do nothing for 5 minutes. I can't relax!

Ok, here's what you can do:

Go for a brisk walk, without your phone or other distractions.

As you walk, take big, deep breaths in and out, and feel the temperature of the air in your lungs.

Look around and notice all the different colours, smells, sights, sounds. Feel your body. No judgements required - just notice and take it all in.

The deep breaths will calm you down. Start to walk a bit slower if that happens. Slow down your breathing.

Once you return back home or at work, see if you feel calm enough to just sit still for a few more breaths, without moving and with your eyes closed. Your brain will enjoy that.

[Here's a free 3 minute meditation you can try now](#).

I'm not into religious stuff - I don't want to fill my mind with eastern philosophy.

You don't have to!

Mindfulness and meditation do mainly come from eastern traditions, but you don't need to study them at all or fill your mind with that stuff.

Meditation is not how much extra stuff you put into your mind. It's how much you can let go.

Mindfulness does have a nice body of scientific evidence to show its benefits for body and mind, so you may want to do it for that reason.

Or maybe you might want to just chill out a bit more! Do something different instead of just living on autopilot, if that's how you feel.

But if you love your life, and your work and relationships, and think you're calm and focused and happy enough, there's no need for you to try mindfulness.

Keep doing what you're doing and let us know how you do it in the comments please!

You shouldn't have to have a process to put your mind in the right state.

By making this statement, you're implying that your mind is in the 'wrong state'. Is that correct?

If so, what are you going to do about it?

Either you can carry on with life as you already are. In the so called wrong state, or you can try something like mindfulness. Or something else if you like.

Remember, our current society isn't the kind of society that the human brain was evolved to cope with. Phones, internet, hours and hours in front of screens, cars, concrete jungles, big cities. I think it's all very unnatural and a shock for the human brain. The brain is reacting back and asking for greater stability and peace. That's why depression is our new epidemic, in my opinion.

Mindfulness is one way to survive and thrive in this new landscape.

The [ultimate](#) practice of meditation is not to do a process. It's to stop doing all processes and let your mind rest and recharge and find its own natural state. It's very natural and relaxing.

What's the return on investment (ROI) on time spent on mindfulness?

The busier I am, I literally spend more time in meditation. The reason is, it makes me more relaxed and focused and energised, and less stressed.

If you're a geek, here's a random calculation:

If typical working day = 8 hours

If 30 minutes of meditation increases productivity by 20%

Then you work for 7.5 hours a day, and you actually get effectively 9 hours of work done in the 7.5 hours.

In my experience, prioritising is much more effective through mindfulness, so I think without mindfulness people actually spend half their time doing the wrong thing.

So, let's say you do 2 x 30-minute meditations a day, and it increases productivity by 50%

Then, 7 hours of work a day results in effectively 10.5 hours of work.

The ROI of meditation is 1.5

Random stats, but fun to do!

"The insurance giant Aetna measured the results of offering mindfulness-based training to team members and found that team members who participated in the training added roughly 60 minutes of productivity per week, which they calculated was worth about \$3,000 per year per team member."

Does the effect last long enough for me to consider it beneficial?

The effect of mindfulness and meditation has been shown in studies to be cumulative. That's why [monks' brains are so much happier and more resilient](#) than the common human being on the street.

So, with every day you practice, your brain gets more and more resilient and wise.

You need to commit to the practice for a couple of weeks, and then decide for yourself if you want to carry on. In the end, you can experiment, and you can decide. I'm just here to point towards something that works well for millions of people, and thousands of experiments, so could be worth a little try if you haven't had a go yet.