

## INFORMAL MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

If you are feeling intimidated or reluctant to try mindfulness, I suggest that you start with the more active or informal mindfulness practices, such as the two listed here. Once you are comfortable with these techniques, you can try more formal mindfulness exercises. (I have a list of mindfulness resources on my website [www.lovedontleaveme.com](http://www.lovedontleaveme.com).)

### A WALK

Try walking mindfully. It might be easier to be mindful if you walk in an area that is unfamiliar (but safe) to you. It will help to get you out of the habits and routines that you may have already integrated into your normal walk. Try to leave your electronic devices behind. Notice the sights and sounds around you; notice your breath and the sensation when your feet meet the ground. Observe what is around you. Awaken all of your sense, tune in to your experiences, and connect with them.

When you return from your walk, record your experience. Try to include all of your senses when you describe your experience by answering the following questions:

What did you touch?

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What did you smell?

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What did you see?

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What did you hear?

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What did you taste?

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If a thought unrelated to your mindfulness practice entered your consciousness, how did you handle it?

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Did you experience your walk with increased awareness?

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## MORNING COFFEE OR TEA

Another informal mindfulness exercise that I love involves my morning cup of coffee. If you don't drink coffee, substitute your favorite morning beverage.

After you've prepared your beverage of choice, get in your comfortable spot and hold the mug in your hands. Notice the temperature of the mug and how it makes your hands feel. Notice how the mug feels when you put it to your lips before you take a sip. Notice the smell of your beverage. Does the smell remind you of anything? When you look inside the mug, what do you see? Notice the sound as you take your first sip. Do you hear a slurp, a gulp, a swallow? Focus on the subtle flavors in your beverage. Whether it's coffee or tea there are always several flavors that are combined. What do you notice?

Record your experiences:

What did you touch?

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What did you smell?

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What did you see?

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What did you hear?

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What did you taste?

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If a thought unrelated to your mindfulness practice entered your consciousness, how did you handle it?

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Did you experience your morning coffee or tea with increased awareness?

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