

THE BENEFITS OF BEING "PRESENT"



Have you ever arrived home and realize you don't remember which route you took to get there? Have you had your child say to you, "you're not listening to me" and you realize that they are right. Even though you were nodding your head and looking at them, they could tell your thoughts were somewhere else.

It's fascinating how your body can physically be present while your mind is elsewhere. The consequences can be minor to devastating. Relationships can suffer—both personal and in the workplace. Individuals can feel undervalued and misunderstood when they sense you're not present and attentive. Not being present is really about being disengaged and distracted. This can lead to unplanned mistakes

and unproductive hours at work. Being present simply means you are focused on being in the here and now.

Another association for being present is "mindfulness". Research from 2019 Trusted Source found that mindfulness practices, including present-moment awareness, may help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. When you

focus on the present moment, you're paying attention to what's happening. Mindfulness helps you recognize your thoughts and mindfully recognize how the moment is affecting your emotions and thoughts. With practice you can increase your awareness allowing you to be more proactive in interrupting unhelpful thought patterns that can lead to unnecessary distress.

What are the benefits of being present?

1. Improve your work and personal relationships.
2. Help reduce stress.
3. Increase productivity.
4. Enhance quality of life.
5. Have a positive effect on mental health.

Why is it so hard?

Our mind can process information so fast that staying focused on the present moment can feel boring, and sometimes painful when the present moment is stressful. But working to be “mindfully” present helps us truly enjoy and embrace life.

Simple tips to being more present:

Start your day with your senses:

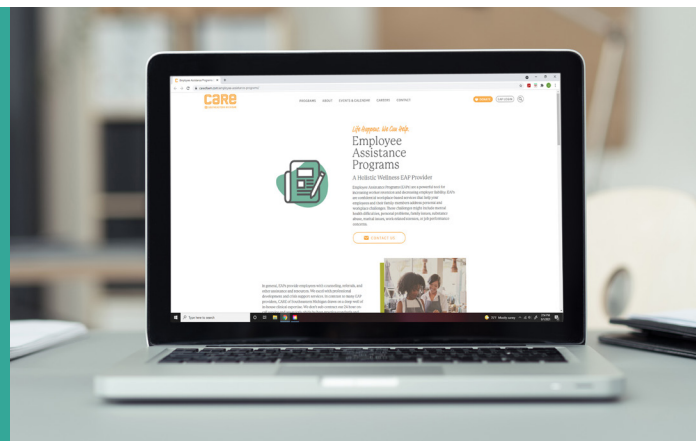
- Stop and enjoy the smell of your morning coffee
- Look out the window and see the sunrise
- Listen for the birds and other sounds of nature as you walk to your car

Tune in to how your body feels throughout the day. Our bodies communicate to us the symptoms of stress and are often ignored by not being mindfully present. This can lead to what is referred to as “cumulative stress” which can contribute to a variety of mental and physical health challenges. Symptoms can include sweating, heart racing, headache, sore back, etc. Once you’re tuned in to the present you can be proactive in taking care of yourself. Here are a few easy things you can do.

- Focus on your breath. Breathe in slowly through your nose and hold your breath for a count of three, then release it slowly by mouth. Do this a few times.
- Walk it off. Ideally outside but just walking around the workplace helps.
- Stretch. Muscles become very tense when stressed or under used. Just move.

Visit CARE WorkLife Solutions website for more learning on this important topic. This month’s online seminar titled, *Switch on to Being More Present* will be available on demand starting September 21st.

Many resources are available. Check with your human resource representative if you do not have your company password.



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