THE INSTITUTE FOR FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE®

Tips to Incorporate Mindful Movement Every Day

KNOWN HEALTH CONDITIONS THAT BENEFIT FROM MINDFUL MOVEMENT:

- Anxiety
- Asthma
- Cardiometabolic diseases
- Carpal Tunnel
- Chronic Pain
- Depression
- Multiple sclerosis

Why? Mindfulness brings a new dimension to movement. Rather than moving for the sake of moving, or to accomplish a goal, mindful movement is practiced to anchor the body in the present moment. Many people feel more harmonious, relaxed, and calm after practicing mindful movement.

Classes? If you would like a structured mindful movement program, many forms of yoga, qi gong, and tai chi are wonderful ways to learn a series of movements that are connected to breathing and mental practices. Many health benefits are associated with this kind of mindful movement, ranging from improved lung function to better mental health.

On Your Own? Mindful movement can also be done in just a few minutes—just set a reminder on your phone so you remember to do it.

Standing Exercise:

- Stand with your feet planted, shoulder length apart, knees slightly bent.
- Relax your shoulders and tuck your chin slightly.
- Breathe in and out, then inhale as you bring your arms out to the side, raising them slowly up over your head as you inhale.
- Exhale as you let your arms lower, then bring your hands in to rest on your abdomen.
- Repeat, raising and lowering your arms, at least five times.

Walking Exercise:

- Stand still and take a deep breath. Be aware of your body and how it feels. Where is your weight settled? Feel your heels pushing into the ground and be aware of the muscles holding you upright.
- Bend your knees and feel your weight shift. Take deep breaths and pay attention to your muscles, your skin, the air, and the sounds around you.
- Begin to walk, very slowly, keeping your knees slightly bent. Be aware of how your heel lands, and pay attention to the sensation of your weight shifting across your foot.

Continue to walk slowly, breathing, and keeping your awareness on the kinetic motion of your body. You can practice this for a set distance or a set time, whatever feels more comfortable for you.

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