

# FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

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## Mindful Living

With everyone struggling with the stress of everyday life; the concept of *Mindfulness* has received more attention as a means of coping by helping us become more present in the moment.

*Mindfulness* is a practice that could help train and prepare your mind to stay composed by being more cognizant of the negative thoughts and emotions that originate from stressful situations.

Being “present” or more “aware” can help us minimize negative thoughts and perceived stressors, making efforts to improve health more likely. The negative thoughts in our mind are sometimes so strong that we neglect to pay attention to the reality of the situation.

*Mindful Living* may help an individual focus and fully experience the present moment—all by applying nonjudgmental thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Through this practice, a greater acceptance of oneself and current situations may be attained, which may positively impact one’s general well-being.

### Healthy Eating

Mindful Eating can be described as making intentional choices of what and how much we are eating; and being aware of what is motivating us to eat.

We know that even a modest reduction in body weight has been shown to reduce risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Becoming more aware of our food intake as well as what motivates us to eat can help us achieve better health.

Try to:

- Determine motivation behind eating...sometimes environment and emotions suggest we eat when we are not hungry.
- Before tasting, observe your food with all your senses.
- Eat slowly and without distraction.

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension FCS Agents, A Team of Healthy South Texas specialists developed the *Mindful Living* Supplements.



### **Exercise**

Practicing *mindfulness* could help eliminate issues or thoughts that often act as barrier to a healthier life. Being mindful for exercise means to use our awareness of our body and thoughts to have enjoyable, safe and beneficial exercise. Regular exercise or 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week, has long been touted as a key factor of healthy living, especially to decrease risk of chronic diseases, like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Try to:

- Take a moment to assess your body for pain and aches, and adjust your workout goals if needed.
- Remember that exercise is self-care.
- Use proper posture during exercise and everyday activities to prevent injury.
- Focus your attention on your movement and breathing pattern.

### **Parenting**

Parent– child conflict and stress is induced when parents are less available especially when they are busy, stressed, tired, overwhelmed, or preoccupied with other thoughts. Practicing these *mindfulness* skills will enable healthy parent-child relationship and improve psychological and emotional wellbeing for parents and children.

- Listen with full attention.
- Accept the traits and behaviors of yourself and your child.
- Be supportive of your child’s emotions (even if they are negative).
- Attend to his or her needs with love and kindness.
- Accept the fact that parenting can be challenging.
- Be aware of emotional triggers (feelings or judgements from parent’s own childhood).
- Establish family rules and rituals to encourage parent-child bonding.
- Avoid worrying about your to-do list and allow for your own personal time and time of your child.

### **Digital Awareness**

Use of technology changed the way we approach our work and daily activities.

Time spent on digital devices replaced our time spent on exercising, bonding, and being creative. A digital detox will help you unplug and disconnect from technology and to reconnect with friends and family.

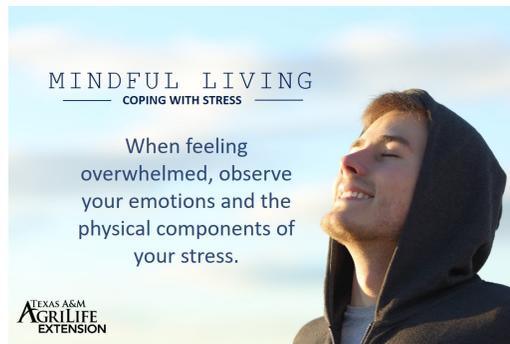
- Start your morning routine without your phone or other digital devices.
- Allow at least an hour each day of screen free time.
- Turn off social media notifications.
- Take breaks from social media to go outdoors.
- Encourage screen free family meals to reconnect with family members.
- Avoid screens in your bedroom.
- Use paper and pen for note taking instead of using digital devices.
- Stretch your body every 30 minutes while sitting or using your computer.
- Avoid talking or texting while driving.



**Coping with Stress**

Stress can affect our bodies and minds in powerful ways; from raising our blood pressure, to causing muscle pain. Becoming mindful and being able to identify how stress is affecting our thoughts and body is the first step in learning how to cope with stress healthfully.

- Mindfulness starts with breathing. Try to only focus on your breathing for a few minutes. Acknowledge sounds or thoughts without judgement and then return your focus to your breathing.
- Try a Body Scan. Focus on one part of the body at a time for several moments. Focus on your toes then gradually move your attention to the soles of your feet, then up your legs and body.
- Speak to yourself kindly. Think of someone whom you have unconditional love. Then address yourself as if you were talking to that person.



**Watermelon Freezies**

Serves 6 | Serving Size: 14oz popsicle  
Total Time: 10 min | Prep: 5 min | Cook: 5 min

These watermelon freezies are a perfect summer treat!

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup seedless watermelon chunks
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup water
- 6 small 6-ounce paper cups
- 6 popsicle sticks or plastic spoons



**Directions:**

Mix watermelon, orange juice, and water together in a blender until smooth. Pour into paper cups and place in freezer.

When pops are partially frozen, insert sticks or small plastic spoons into the cups.

These will be your handles. Continue freezing until hard. When it is time to serve, dip the cup into warm water and pull the popsicle from its wrapper.

**Chef's Tip:** Warm water makes it easier to remove the cups from the frozen mixture, leaving you with a delicious summer treat on a stick!

Nutrition Facts: Serving Size 1 4oz popsicle | Servings Per Batch 6 | Amount Per Serving:  
Calories 37 | Total Fat 0g | Saturated Fat 0g | Trans Fat 0g | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 3mg | Total Carbohydrate 9g | Dietary Fiber 0g | Sugars 7g | Protein 0g



**Build Safe Sun Habits**

Build safe sun habits into your family's daily routine. Lead by example—children will respond better when they see you protecting your skin. Begin by teaching them to:

- \* Use Sunscreen.
- \* Wear protective clothing.
- \* Wear Sunglasses.
- \* Wear a hat that shades the face, neck and ears.
- \* Reduce time to outdoors between 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.