

## 5 Mindfulness Exercises and Activities for Teens

### 1. Mindful Eating

In this exercise, your teen will learn how to **eat mindfully**. The example used is an orange, but it can be almost anything. Here's what to do:

1. Start by holding your orange and rolling it in your hand, noticing how it feels.
2. Hold the orange close to your nose and take a sniff. Think about what it smells like.
3. Pay attention to what it looks like and what it feels like.
4. Peel your orange mindfully and stay present.
5. Taste the orange, noting the flavor, the texture, the juiciness, etc.

### 2. Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing is another simple exercise your teen can try. He or she will focus on breathing, but refrain from forcing themselves to breathe in a certain way. Have your teen follow these steps:

1. Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. Breathe normally and notice how it feels; pay attention as the air goes in and out of your lungs.
3. Notice how your breath moves your body; does your chest and/or your belly rise and fall as you breathe?
4. Sit for a few minutes, paying attention to your breathing, and become as relaxed as you can be.
5. If your mind starts to wander from the task at hand, gently guide it back to your breath.

### 3. Mindful Walking

Mindful walks are great ways to practice and maintain mindfulness in your everyday life, and your teenager will likely feel the same. Guide them through these four easy steps:

1. Pick up one foot and take a slow-motion step forward. Notice what you have to do to stay balanced.
2. Walk in slow motion, one step at a time. Pay attention to how your arms, legs, and feet move as you walk.
3. Breathe in and out in time with your steps. Stay relaxed but keep your attention focused on your breath and your steps, working in tandem.
4. If your mind starts to wander, bring it gently back to your slow-motion walking.

### 4. Mindful Word

This exercise instructs you to choose a word that connects back to mindfulness and use it as an anchor to keep you present, calm, and collected. Teenagers should find it easy to follow and helpful in maintaining their mindfulness. Here are the steps:

1. Think of a word that seems calm or soothing to you, like "peace", "love", "sunlight", or "calm."
2. Think the word to yourself, saying it silently in your own mind. Say it again as you breathe, once when you breathe in and once when you breathe out. Stay focused on the word.
3. If/when your mind begins to wander, gently bring it back to your word.
4. Challenge yourself to do this for one minute. If that seems too easy, try five minutes!

### 5. Mindful Driving

This is a great exercise for teenagers because it will not only help them become more mindful, it can also encourage them to be better and safer drivers. Here's how it works:

1. Take a moment before you start the car to cultivate greater awareness. Think about sitting in the driver's seat right now.
2. Take one slow, deep breath as you settle into your seat. Make sure you are comfortable and you can easily reach the pedals. Adjust your seat if necessary.
3. Fasten your seat belt and say to yourself, "I plan to pay attention while I'm driving. I plan to drive safely and well."
4. Shift your attention to the mirrors, checking to make sure they are in the right position and adjusting them if they're not.
5. Take another slow, deep breath and start the car. Expand your awareness to the area directly around the car, looking for people, other cars, or anything else that could be an obstacle.
6. As you drive, pay attention to any of the many situations that require you to slow down or speed up. Keep your attention focused on your driving and the situations around you.
7. If you feel distracted or find your mind wandering, remind yourself that you are driving and refocus on the task at hand.