

Headspace for Educators

Mindful tools for the classroom

For students age 11 +



Table of contents

3

A letter to
educators

4

How to use
this guide

5

Tips for
getting
started

7

Mindful
Basics

5 days of
exercises

8

Mindful
Muscles

15 days of
exercises

10

Mindful
Habits

30 days of
exercises

14

6 common
questions
from fellow
educators

15

Helpful
terms to
know

17

More ways
to bring
mindfulness
into class



Hey Educators,

Whether you're feeling inspired to connect more with your students or you're looking for a new way to bring calm to your classroom, Headspace can help your class build healthy habits that last a lifetime. Better focus, less stress, and happier thoughts are just a few minutes away.

To help you find exercises best fit for the classroom, we partnered with fellow educators and kids' mindfulness experts to design this guide for you and your students.

First, visit headspace.com/educators to start your free educator's membership and create your personal account. Then, have fun exploring Mindful Basics, Mindful Muscles, and Mindful Habits with your class. Doing this series in order will help build your classroom's practice and confidence, but the exercises can be used anytime, anywhere. Try them before an exam, after lunch, or before independent work time.

This guide makes building mindful habits with your students a little easier, and a lot of fun. You're well on your way to creating a happier, more mindful learning environment.



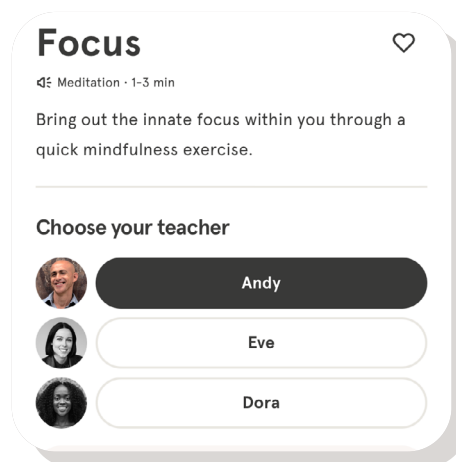
The Headspace Social Impact Team

How to use the app

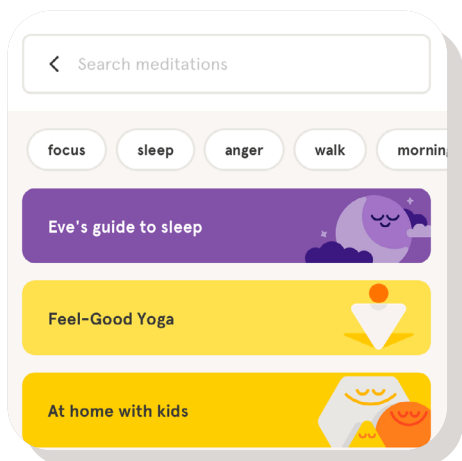
Working through this guide in order will help your classroom build their practice. You can also favorite the exercises your class loves and return to them whenever you need a break.



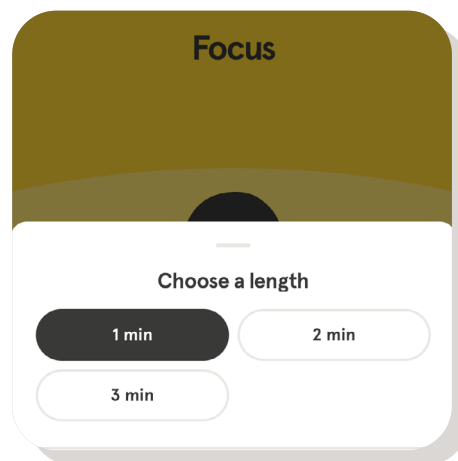
Visit headspace.com/educators to start your free educator's membership. Then, click the title of any underlined exercise in this guide to open on your desktop browser.



Choose your instructor. Get to know them and find your class's favorite voice.



You can also find each exercise in the mobile Headspace app by using the search bar.



To change the length of your practice, tap the settings symbol within the exercise.

Tips for getting started



Bringing Headspace to the classroom is easy, even if you're still learning mindfulness too. Take a second to congratulate yourself for getting started.

Here are some tips and tricks to help you build your confidence and enjoy building this new habit with your class.

- Help your students let go of any pressure to “get it right.” There’s no right way to practice mindfulness.
- Practice alongside your students to help everyone feel less self-conscious about trying something new.
- Mindfulness isn’t about forcing your class to be calm. In fact, recognizing when they aren’t calm can help them move through their feelings together.
- Create deeper connections with your class by sharing your experiences with each other. What came up during your practice?
- Some students might just want to rest during mindfulness exercises. Let them!

What we'll cover:



Mindful Muscles

15 days

Use these tools to help your class feel confident and present during their practice. You can try the exercises individually, or as part of a 15-day plan.



Mindful Basics

5 days

Introduce mindfulness to the class with five days of beginner's exercises. Start here, and return to them whenever the class needs a quick break.



Mindful Habits

30 days

This 30-day challenge combines the tools and basics to help your class build strong habits. At the end, you'll reward them with a Headspace certificate to celebrate their mindfulness skills.

Mindful Basics

Introduce mindfulness to the class with five days of beginner's exercises. Start here, and return to them whenever the class needs a quick break.



Day 1

Focused Attention (Video)
followed by **Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 1)**

Learn how to focus on the mind and body. Then, try it out with an exercise.

Day 2

Noting (Video) followed by
Paying Attention (Kids exercise)

Get curious about your experiences, like thinking or boredom, without trying to change it.

Day 3

Body Scan (Video) followed by
Body Scan (Meditation)

Help your students check in with themselves by noticing how their body feels.

Day 4

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 2)

For this quick stress reliever, try tensing and relaxing different muscles in the body.

Day 5

Classroom Mindfulness (Meditation)

Take a few minutes to center the class during a busy day.

Tip of the week:

Check in with your class. How do they feel after getting some headspace?

Mindful Muscles

Use these tools to help your class feel confident and present during their practice. You can try the exercises individually, or as part of a 15-day plan.



Day 1

Classroom Mindfulness (Meditation)

Take a few minutes to center the class during a busy day.

Day 2

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 1)

Learning how to focus can build your class's confidence towards mindfulness.

Day 3

Body Scan (Meditation)

Have your class sit and notice how their body feels from head to toe.

Friendly reminder:

Embrace the mess.

Day 4

Appreciation (Kids exercise, 9-12)

Gratitude can help your class reduce negativity and encourage openness.

Day 5

Kindness (Kids exercise, 9-12)

Students will imagine doing something kind for themselves and someone else.

Day 6

Reset (Meditation)

Hit pause during a busy day with a breathing exercise.

Day 7

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 2)

For this quick stress reliever, try tensing and relaxing different muscles in the body.



Day 8

Exam Prep (Meditation)

Help your class relax and find their focus before a test, quiz or practice exercise.

Day 9

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 3)

Use words to help concentration. Try repeating “breathing in, breathing out” to help the class focus on sitting still.

Day 10

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 4)

Noticing how big feelings show up in the body can help students move through them.

Day 11

Resting Awareness (Video) Breathe (Meditation)

Instead of trying to make something happen in your practice, this video teaches you to let go, and observe.

Day 12

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 5)

Help your class manage difficult emotions by focusing on the five senses.

Day 13

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 6)

Have the class send friendly wishes to friends and family. Then, watch the kindness grow.

Day 14

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 7)

Be kind to yourself, too. Create space for your class to feel grateful for their hard work.

Day 15

Breathe (Meditation)

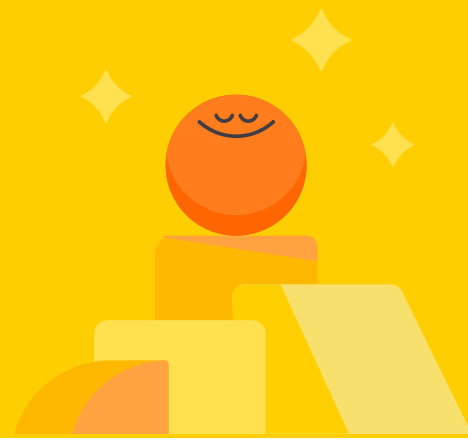
Take a deep breath. Your students will focus on noticing their breath, its rhythm and how it feels.

Check in:

Three weeks of Headspace can increase compassion by 27%.
What would that mean for your classroom?

Mindful Habits

This 30 day challenge combines the tools and basics you've been working on to help your class build strong habits. At the end, you can reward your students with a certificate to honor all their hard work.



Day 1

Learning a Skill (Video) followed by
Breathe (Meditation)

Mindfulness is like learning any new skill
— it's all about practice.

Day 2

Remember the Blue Sky (Video)
followed by Finding Happiness at
Home (Course, Session 1)

Imagine difficult feelings as if they're
clouds coming in and out of view, then
try it out.

Day 3

Changing Perspectives (Video)
followed by Basics (Course, session 1)

Learn how to handle passing thoughts
so your class can feel more calm.

Day 4

Am I Doing This Right? (Video)
Basics (Course, session 2)

Let go of your worries by focusing on
the breath.

Day 5

Letting go of Effort (Video) followed
by Basics (Course, session 3)

Help your students let go of "trying too
hard." Let these thoughts pass without
judgment.

Day 6

Classroom Mindfulness (Meditation)

Take a few minutes to center the class
during a busy day.

Friendly reminder:

Grownups aren't the only ones who experience stress. Help your students be
kind to their minds



Day 7

Restore (Meditation)

Help a restless class quiet their mind by taking a few deep breaths.

Day 8

Taking a Break (Meditation)

Take a breather. Reconnect with a feeling of being present so that your class can feel refreshed.

Day 9

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 2)

For this quick stress reliever, try tensing and relaxing different muscles in the body.

Day 10

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 3)

Use words to help concentration. Try repeating “breathing in, breathing out” to help the class focus on sitting still.

Day 11

Paying Attention (Kids exercise, 9–12)

Students will practice being present by listening to sounds as they begin and end.

Day 12

Focus (Meditation)

Help students build focus by resting their attention on one thing at a time.

Day 13

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 4)

Noticing how big feelings show up in the body can help students move through them.

Day 14

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 5)

Help your class manage difficult emotions by focusing on the five senses.

Day 15

Loving Kindness (Video) followed by Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 6)

Learn about a practice called loving-kindness, then send friendly wishes to loved ones.

Take a minute:

Put compassion in your lesson plan.



Day 16

Unwind (Meditation)

This quick practice focuses on releasing tension in the body to help the class unwind.

Day 17

Exam Prep (Meditation)

Help your class relax and find their focus before a test, quiz or practice exercise.

Day 18

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 7)

Create space for your class to feel grateful for their hard work.

Day 19

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 8)

Create positive connections with your class by reflecting on joyful moments.

Day 20

Finding Happiness at Home (Course, session 9)

Make friends with every emotion by teaching students to name their feelings and note their body's reaction.

Day 21

Listening to Others (Meditation)

Improve classroom listening skills with an exercise on refocusing when distractions arise.

Day 22

Reset (Meditation)

Instead of focusing on the busy-ness of the day, check in with how you and your students are feeling.

Day 23

Focus (Meditation)

Help students establish focus by resting their attention on one thing at a time.

Day 24

Stay Positive (Kids exercise, 6-8)

This practice uses slow movements to help release restless energy.

Check in:

Stress can spread quickly throughout a class. Take a minute to break the cycle.



Day 25

Breathe (Meditation)

Take a deep breath. Your students will focus on noticing their breath, its rhythm, and how it feels.

Day 26

Restore (Meditation)

Help a restless class quiet their mind. It's time to refocus by taking a few deep breaths.

Day 27

Unwind (Meditation)

This quick practice focuses on releasing tension in the body to help the class unwind.

Day 28

Refresh (Meditation)

Wash away any tension in the classroom with a classic visualization technique.

Day 29

Calm (Kids exercise, 6–8)

Students will use the words “breathing in, breathing out” to focus on their breath.

Day 30

Calm (Kids content, 9–12)

This practice encourages students to get curious about their breath and how it feels in the body.

Congratulations!

Your class finished 30 days of mindfulness. How does everyone feel? Remember to reward your students with their Headspace certificate.

6 common questions from fellow educators



Why is Headspace helpful in the classroom?

Headspace is the perfect tool when your class needs a moment of calm, and it can help your students build life-long skills of acceptance, self-compassion, and being present. Over time, these resources will give them the curiosity and confidence to understand their thoughts, focus better, and stay resilient to things they can't control.

How do I get started?

Start your class off with Mindful Basics to introduce them to the fundamentals of mindfulness. From there, try a longer program or explore this guide to find your students' favorite exercises. You don't need to be an expert in mindfulness — just encourage your class to approach Headspace with curiosity and an open mind.

How do I sit during a mindfulness exercise?

It's about what's most comfortable for each student. But for starters, we recommend sitting comfortably in a chair with legs uncrossed, feet flat on the floor, and hands resting on the legs or lap. Some students may prefer standing, or shifting their weight from side to side. There are no hard and fast rules with mindfulness.

Do we have to keep our eyes closed?

Students can keep their eyes open or closed, depending on what's comfortable for them. Sometimes resting your gaze on a spot in front of you can improve focus.

What if my students have a hard time with mindfulness?

It can be uncomfortable to sit with your thoughts and emotions. For kids who've had difficult life experiences, it can be especially overwhelming. To make sure everyone enjoys these mindful breaks, give your students the option to just rest. Remind your class that mindfulness takes practice, just like learning an instrument or playing a sport.

School is already so busy. How do I find the time?

These short exercises were chosen to be easier to squeeze into your classroom. You can link them to another part of your classroom routine, like before silent reading time, at the start of class, or after lunch. Some teachers use these exercises when their class is especially wound up, or when everyone needs a breather.

More ways to bring mindfulness to the classroom



“Zoom” by István Bányai

This interactive book explains how difficult emotions give us “tunnel vision,” making it hard to see the bigger picture.

- As you turn each page, ask students to guess what the scene is about.
- Ask them how certain they are about their guess.
- When you turn the page, a wider view is displayed, showing that the last view was incomplete.
- At the end, ask your students to share a time when something turned out differently than they expected. Start by sharing your own story, like a time you thought you didn’t like a new school or job until you made a new friend, or when you misunderstood someone until you got to know them better.

“Just Like Me” Practice

This exercise prompts students to connect with others and build empathy.

- Have the class sit in a circle or small groups.
- Ask students to think about what they might have in common with each other.
- Their answers may be simple at first (gender, hair color, they live in a house, etc.) but they can evolve into deeper sharing (they want to be loved, they feel scared sometimes).
- Invite students to start every share with “just like me this person...”
- Wrap up the exercise by having the students reflect silently if this shifted how they feel about themselves or the others.

More ways to bring mindfulness into your class

Counting breaths

This silent activity helps students attune to one another, feel calmer, and regulate restlessness.

- For this activity, have students pair up and take turns guiding each other in 3 silent, mindful breaths.
- The first student will put up one, two, and then three fingers corresponding to each breath.
- The breather can place their hand on their belly or over their heart as they breathe.

Hello Game

Get students to practice listening and connecting with others.

- Have students partner up, ideally in a way that partners can be rotated.
- Have the students take turns looking into their partner's eyes and describe what they see.
- Ask them to use the phrase, "Hello (name of partner), your eyes seem (describe color or other aspects)". Using the word "seem" instead of "are" encourages students to understand the difference between fact and opinion, and to acknowledge that others may think differently.

Book recommendations for exploring emotions

- Ahn's Anger by Gail Silver
- Moody Cow Meditates by Kerry MacLean
- Visiting Feelings by Lauren Rubenstein
- Steps and Stones by Gail Silver
- Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer

Terms to know



Acceptance:

Mindfulness encourages us to accept our thoughts and feelings for what they are. This doesn't mean we have to pretend to be okay with difficult experiences. Rather, we're looking at ourselves without judgment.

Anchors:

Anchors refer to an experience in the present moment that students can focus on. The two most common are breath and sound. When distractions inevitably arise, students can always refocus their attention on their anchor.

Body Scan:

Body scans are used in many of our exercises. With eyes closed, your class will notice sensations in their body, like heat or pressure, as they scan down from head to toe. Regularly using this technique actually promotes communication between the parts of the brain that regulate emotions, helping your students feel more in control.

Resting Awareness:

Many exercises use anchors or focused awareness, but some try not to focus on anything at all. This is resting awareness — allowing the mind to feel comfortable without focusing on anything in particular.

Mindfulness:

The quality of being present in everyday life, fully engaged with whatever we're doing in the moment, free from distraction or judgment. When we're less distracted, it's easier to be present with ourselves and others.

Noting:

This technique helps you stay present by naming your thoughts, distractions, or feelings as they arise during practice. By noting these observations, your class can learn how to refocus and let go without judgment.

Observing:

We specifically chose 1-6 minutes exercises so that they're easier to squeeze into your classroom. It's important to remember these few minutes will help the rest of your day feel calmer and give you a moment to breathe.

Visualization:

This technique is about creating pictures in our head that help ground your experience. In practice, you might be asked to imagine a blue sky or a light scanning down your body to create a feeling of warmth and peace.

Congrats!

You built a mindful habit.

Awarded to:



Ready to keep going?