

# Stay Calm Archives

## **Iowa Arboretum- Close by...and amazing!**

[The Iowa Arboretum](#) was founded in 1968 and continues to expand in the land and opportunities in Central Iowa. A short drive from Ames, you will find many trails to explore that include Hosta gardens, native prairie and oak savannas. They also have various events including the upcoming Fall Color Walk Series. [Go to the website for more details.](#)

## **A Wild Idea**

Half an hour east of Des Moines, the [Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge](#) offers a look into Iowa's prairie past and present - complete with roaming bison and elk, native wildflowers, grasses and sedges. Since it was founded 31 years ago, the Refuge now has over 6,000 acres. It is now one of the largest tallgrass prairie restorations in the world and home to a diverse range of species, a visitor center and many educational, recreational and research activities.

Go to the [Iowa National Heritage Foundation](#). to read an article of the history and updates at the Refuge.

## **The Healing Forest**

The [Healing Forest website](#) has 100+ activities and resources to explore. They offer a range of new ideas that grow your calm, clarity, creativity, and health with the help of nature. The website shares that Healing Forest is a journey to discover the remarkable healing powers of nature. Explore fascinating forests and beautiful nature connection activities that create peace, purpose, and health in your life. Unique ideas which merge the benefits of mindfulness, creativity, and nature to improve your well-being. Visit the site to learn the secrets of healing in nature, with nature.

Watch this video... [Wild Soul](#)

## **A “Just Like Me” Practice to Expand Your Circle of Compassion**

From Mindful.org “As we process the tragic events in Ukraine and around the world, we can choose to cultivate a sense of what ties all of humanity together: the desire to overcome suffering.

When we’re aware that events of war and injustice are unfolding, wherever we are in the world, we often feel a powerful sense of connection with those who are at the center of the conflict. For many of us, this moment invites us to reflect and realize that the people who are suffering in conflicts around the world are not so different from ourselves.

This practice offers an opportunity to put aside differences and tap into the awareness that all of us wish for happiness and freedom from suffering, that this too is a part of our common humanity.” To read more and practice the guided meditation, [go here](#).

## **Homosassa Springs Underwater Live Cam - Manatees**

Part of Explore.org, this underwater camera dives into Homosassa Springs, Florida sharing a window with the crystal-clear water. Many fish are in view and sometimes the manatee swims through. With calm music playing, this is a nice option for a meditation if you enjoy that. Check it out [here](#).

## **Is Mental Fitness Part of Your Workout Routine?**

Mindful movement specialist and author Cara Bradley explains how we can cross-train for our mental health, the same way we cross-train for physical fitness. She writes “I define mental fitness as the capacity of the body and mind to work together to increase our physical energy, emotional stability, and mental clarity and calm. If the idea of getting mentally fit is new to you, think about combining your current physical exercise with additional mental fitness activities that cultivate calm and build awareness and clarity. If you don’t have a workout routine right now and are interested in creating one, starting with these mental fitness tips can help you develop a balanced plan for physical *and* mental fitness.” Read the entire article at [mindful.org here](#)

## **A User's Guide to a Journey Called Mindfulness**

Mindfulness meditation is not a one-time thing. You do it again and again. As you keep doing it, a variety of challenges emerge. It’s a paradox that never goes away. You start meditating because you want to get somewhere to find some improvement and gain some benefits. But if you reach for benefits, as longtime meditator Jessica Morey says, “you can become striving-oriented, obsessed with trying to get somewhere, to gain experiences.” And yet, meditation, like life, can feel like a journey. It may not be clear where you’re going or whether you have a destination at all, and yet you keep going. It’s not a path from A to Z. It meanders, cycles, and circles back on itself. Fortunately, there are fellow travelers. This is a great article to start off 2022 from Mindful.org – you will [find it here](#)

## **Three Guided Meditations to Help You Find Balance This Season**

While the holidays are over for most, there could be some lingering feelings as you get back to your routine. Holidays are typically a time of celebration, they can come with certain expectations and a pressure to meet those expectations. Whether it’s the pressure to make it a memorable experience for your kids or the pressure of facing complicated family dynamics; the holidays can be just as stressful as they are celebratory.

To meet whatever might have come up this holiday season or in the aftermath, Mindful.org has gathered a few guided meditations to help you cultivate balance and equanimity that may be supportive. For more information, [click here](#)

## The Artists' Grief Deck

COVID-19 presents a unique challenge, among natural disasters, to human culture. Loss is experienced on numerous levels, and it is ongoing. It is not geographically specific, and it takes an enormous toll in human life, it also prevents us from gathering together to mourn, interrupting rituals of grieving across all cultures.

A response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Artists' Grief Deck is a set of 60 medium format 'flashcards' that are individually designed by artists, sometimes in collaboration with grief workers. One side displays an original artwork, created by artists from around the world responding to our open call, and on the reverse is a 'grieving prompt'. [Go to the website](#) and check them out.

## A Mindfulness of Breathing Exercise

by Amishi Jha- Neuroscientist

“Wherever it is that attention goes, the rest of the brain follows. And in some ways, I think it’s very important to consider this. What does this mean? It means that where you pay attention, makes up the moments of your life, it actually makes up your life’s experience.” Check out this article including a short 5-minute video as Amishi Jha walks you through this practice. Find the [article with guided meditation here](#).

## Two Truths and a Lie (Myth) About Mindfulness

by Scott Shute ([full article](#))

Have you ever played the game “Two Truths and a Lie” in a team? Let’s try that with Mindfulness. What is Mindfulness? Simply put, it’s being aware of the present moment in a non-judgmental way.

**Truth: The science backs up the benefits** – There are now over 6000 scientific studies about how mindfulness affects us, like reducing stress, increasing our ability to focus, and increasing our emotional intelligence.

**Truth: At work we’re talking about mindfulness in a secular way** – I’ve found that nearly every spiritual tradition has a practice of meditation. They may call it something else, but the practice of going within is as old as time. What’s new is that we’re finding a way to have a dialogue about it in the workplace that is neutral and accepting of all belief systems.

**Myth – To be successful, I need to “remove all thoughts from my mind”** – I like to keep things simple. If I feel better after practice than I did before I started...it worked! Also, it’s totally normal if there are sometimes that you don’t feel better or more relaxed. It’s called

practice for a good reason... try different things. Find what works for you. Customize it to fit your lifestyle and belief system. Make the practice fit you, not the other way around.

## **Holidays for your health**

Many of us are now in the recovery phase of this pandemic. During the early crisis, we needed to stay home to stay safe. But now that vaccines are available, it's time to think holistically — focusing on the mental, emotional and social aspects of our health, too.

Holidays are so important; they have meaning,” Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, told me. “People have been isolated and fearful for almost two years.” It is time to venture out, safely and with intention.

It starts with staying aware of local Covid conditions, like hospitalizations and vaccination rates, and avoiding crowds and high-risk gatherings where we don't know the vaccination status of others. We'll wear masks when needed and use rapid home tests to keep gatherings Covid-free. And anyone who is sneezing or coughing should always stay home. To read the whole story, [click here](#)

## **A Simple Practice to Move Your Body Before You Meditate**

This sequence emphasizes balance: on your hands, hands, and knees, and standing on one leg, as well as when moving the spine in all directions—forward, backward, and sideways. It's great to do whenever you want to cultivate balance and presence in your body and mind: first thing in the morning or last thing before going to bed or anytime in between. It takes about five minutes, but feel free to repeat the entire sequence or any section as much as you like. Read the entire story at Mindful.org [here](#).

## **Calming Background Noise**

Looking for sounds of nature to create a calming background at work or at home? [Check out this one](#) – plus lots of others available. Find one that helps to keep you focused and enjoy the day.

## **Connect with Nature and Cultivate Your Own Well-Being**

The Bloedel Reserve in Washington State offers a series of walks for well-being that they call *Strolls for Well-Being* at their reserve. During the pandemic – they have created what they call *Strolls at Home* as a way to support individuals to engage in self-care through exercise, mindfulness, and connecting with nature where they live. They adapted the mindfulness practices from its in-person program to create 12 themed, self-guided walks that you can do at your home, in your yard, or around your neighborhood. You can check them out [here](#).

(NOTE: ISU WellBeing and CELT have collaborated to create a similar program- *Strolls for Well-being at ISU* - [click here](#) for more information.)

# Good News: Your Brain Will Adapt to Post-COVID Life

By Laura Fitch, April 15, 2021 (Find full article [here](#))

After lock downs throughout the darkest months of winter, there is a sense that we are collectively losing our minds. From brain fog and forgetting simple things to heightened emotions and general sluggishness, anecdotes from friends and family about the many ways they're feeling "off" are piling up. I find myself cycling through what seem to be the stages of grief—denial, anger, guilt, depression—without ever getting to acceptance."

What the Pandemic Is Doing to Our Brains - These changes are not just a product of our imaginations. "It's all real," says Chair of the Department of Neuroscience at Carleton University Dr. Kim Hellemans, who studies the effects of stress on the brain. "Lack of social interaction, more work happening, always on the screen. All of these things are contributing to a loss of your normal cognitive functioning. We're all overwhelmed."

How to Help Clear Pandemic Brain Fog- After a year of brain fog, forgetting things, surging emotions and depression, will we ever regain what we've lost? How can we get our mojo back? "The beautiful thing about us as a species is that we are highly adaptive and innovative," says Dr. Hellemans. "The brain is very plastic. It has a lot of processes built into it in order to continue to adapt to new environments."

Try a Daily Mindful Check-In Practice - As you prepare for post-COVID life, try incorporating this practice from Bob Stahl into your daily routine.

**Appreciate your time.** Take a moment to thank yourself for the time and space to do this practice.

**Kindly attend to the moment.** Now bring your full attention to the experiences of your body, your mind, and any thoughts or emotions that you're aware of, just as they are.

**Acknowledge yourself.** As your practice comes to a close, once again acknowledge your willingness to show up and be present, knowing that, in this way, you're contributing to your wholeness and well-being.

## One Minute Meditations to calm your mind

Meditation has long been encouraged by experts as an accessible and effective stress-management technique. But with the unprecedented task of working where you sleep, while juggling home-schooling your kids, washing endless dishes and navigating a scary news climate, more of us are in search of tactics to stay sane. Which means you finally may be willing to give meditation a try. Check out these [quick ideas](#) to take a quick slow down at work, home or play!

## Connect with your senses - a walking meditation

This is a great activity for days that you want to take a mindful walk and connect with nature. You can find the entire article, and a recording of this practice, here at [Mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org).

We can connect to our senses and nourish our relationship to the peace, pleasure, and technicolor qualities of the present moment, as we walk. Taking time for an intentional walk can be the key to bringing calm awareness, as you very simply turn your attention to what the body is experiencing, as you bring your awareness to feeling your feet as you walk. This walk can be done on the way to your car, in a park, or even as you're walking down a hallway. All it takes is being awake to what you notice while you're walking. Basic steps once outside include:

1. **Choose a foot to start with.**
2. **Walk with intention.**
3. **Let yourself notice.**
4. **Focus your attention.**
5. **Feel your surroundings.**
6. **Notice when thoughts take over.**
7. **Let yourself experience your surroundings.**
8. **Pause now and then.**
9. **Find your pace.**
10. **Try aimless wandering.**

At the end of your walk, notice how you feel, check in with each one of your senses. What are you aware of right now, having spent this time bringing attention to the sensory experiences? What do you notice now about your mood? Notice what it feels like to inhabit your body and be awake to your precious life.

## **Native American Music**

Sometimes music playing in the background can support a place of peace and calm. Can support you in planning and creating the work that you do. Find the music that feeds your soul and play it in the background. Here is a native American flute example, [go here](#).

## **Daily Live Community Mindfulness Sessions by Mindfulness Center at Brown University**

Mindfulness Center at Brown University where Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is offered and taught is offering FREE mindfulness sessions. All programs are through Zoom, free

and open to the public with participants from around the globe. Each day is a different time of day, length of time and intention - including the Sunday session offered in Spanish and the Saturday session including a yoga practice. Follow the links before to register.

[Mondays 5:30-6:30PM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Guided Sitting Meditation and Mindful Discussion*

[Tuesdays 11:45-12PM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Tuesday Mindful Pause*

[Wednesdays 12:15-1:00PM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Community Meditation Session*

[Thursday 8:00-8:45AM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Guided Lovingkindness Practice and Mindful Discussion*

[Friday 3:00-3:30PM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Mindfulness Group for Young Adults*

[Saturday 10:30-11:30AM \(EDT\) - Register Here](#) - *Guided Mindful Yoga and Mindful Discussion*

[Domingos 11:00-11:30AM\(Hora de Boston\) Gratis REGISTRESE AQUI](#) - *Prácticas de Mindfulness en Español*

TENGA EN CUENTA: para respaldar la seguridad de este evento, "cerramos la sala" 10 minutos después de que comience.

Sessions are informative, inviting and engaging. Check your schedule and try one out

## 5-minute Gratitude Practice

Check out this 5-Minute Gratitude Practice: Savor the Moment by Tapping into Your Senses by Elaine Smookler. She writes:

"Waking up this morning, I glanced at my cell phone and noticed the weather app ominously predicting many days of snow and icy temperatures ahead. Brrr! I could feel the chill of dark thoughts starting to gather. I could feel my body creak with cold and aging. Life's challenges were seemingly everywhere. And yet...I was smiling. I was cheerful. I was grateful. What? Was I crazy?

I made a general goal to cultivate more resilience around the ups and downs of life, so I made a point of tuning my awareness toward the appreciation of life's small delights. I was curious about what I would discover if I focused intentionally on the things that I appreciated. There was nothing particularly special going on, but I noticed that being grateful for little things was already lifting my dark thoughts. Difficulties were still present, but awareness of my gratitude was shifting my view, letting me see that everything was not dark and cold—in fact, many sights and sounds were quite lovely."

This will link you to the page where you can listen and experience the recording and read about the steps to the practice. Check it out on the Mindful website [here](#).



## **Impatience: Why we don't want to wait, and what we can do about it**

From CBS Sunday morning October 25th. When I was growing up, I heard that "patience is a virtue" - often in my life I have not felt very virtuous, especially during COVID. This story looks at impatience, from a medical lens, plus looks at what we can do about it, from a medical lens. And what we can do about it might surprise you - its as simple as going for a walk in nature! Even 15 minutes can reduce blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety. To watch the story, [go here](#).

## **The Best Gift You Can Give Yourself Is Rest**

Stress from the workweek, the weight of difficult emotions, restlessness in the body—any combination of these can interfere with sleep. Having trouble sleeping? Yeah, me too.

Lately I feel like I'm running on high and pumping adrenaline in fight-or-flight mode, even when my body isn't moving.

I was off work last week and went careening into my staycation with a to-do list of household chores and long put off paperwork to accomplish. Instead, I found myself taking comfort in my usual coping mechanisms—snacks and reality TV and experiencing a weird cycle of sleeping either too much or not enough, never quite able to hit the sweet spot. There are a few things that likely contributed to this particular state—lingering [stress from the workweek](#), trying to avoid feeling the weight of the world through my emotions, and some restlessness and pain in my body. Here are a few practices to explore what's keeping us awake.

### **3 Practices to Explore What's Keeping You Awake**

**Usually I have total faith that my body knows what it needs**, but this time I tricked myself into believing I was resting. While binge-watching TV shows, I was suppressing my looming feelings of overwhelm and stress. Elaine Smookler says, "When some piece of news or alarming reality knocks you down, you may well feel completely overwhelmed. It's natural. It's your body's response to alarm." If you can relate, [check out Elaine's practice for making friends with what you're feeling](#).

**So many of us are trying to be empathetic and kind, and feel our feelings**, but it draws on our energy and attention in a way that can interfere with basic needs like sleep. This can feel like walking on a tightrope and coming back to the breath can be a steady anchor when we're teetering. [In this practice roundup](#), Executive Editor Heather Hurlock reminds us to "take a deep, calming breath, and notice what is happening in your body."

**When sleep eludes us, sometimes the best we can hope for is rest**—and they're not always the same thing. Whether you find yourself in need of sleep, rest, or a safe way to process your

feelings, [try these yoga stretches suggested by Steve Calechman](#) to prepare our bodies and minds to slow down.

From [article by Jen Schwartz](#), September 21, 2020 - Mindful.org.

## **How to Navigate Zoom Fatigue With Colleagues and Friends, According to Experts**

You've probably lost count of how many Zoom conferences and video chats you've had since the pandemic began. And if you feel like you're totally burnt out even though you haven't even left the house, you're not crazy — some experts have even coined the term "Zoom fatigue" to explain the phenomena.

**What is Zoom fatigue?** - Zoom fatigue is a unique kind of exhaustion that occurs when people participate in teleconferencing calls for an extended time period according to one expert.

**Here are the highlights from an article on the healthiest ways to manage Zoom fatigue.**

1. Turn the camera off
2. Keep a tight schedule
3. Get dressed up
4. Make meetings 5-10 minutes apart
5. Decline invitations when you must
6. Remind yourself that video chats are a great tool
7. Have fun with it!

Remember, Zoom meetings is a tool that we can use to stay productive, stay connected and stay safe. To read the entire article go [here](#).

## **Nature Calm – Finding Peace In Difficult Times 7 Ways To Still Your Mind**

The very nature of life is to move through cycles of ups and downs. No matter how much we try to predict or control our paths, we are bound to encounter the unexpected. With the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus, people across the world are going through testing times. There is uncertainty, anxiety, suffering and loss. Amidst all this, there is also a big need for hope and resilience. Each one of us must navigate our own journey through this storm. What we can do, is take nature's help in finding our inner strength and peace. We can grow an awareness that this phase will not last forever. The rainbow at the end of the storm is waiting for us. Check out this article for stories, meditation, poems and other options from [Healing Forest website, you can find it here](#).

## **FREE Community Mindfulness Sessions via Zoom**

The Brown Mindfulness Center at Brown University is offering free online mindfulness sessions. Options are seven days a week with various times to fit schedules, all via Zoom. They even offer two sessions in Spanish. This Center is known for offering Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) workshops and teacher training that was started by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Sessions include short *Mindful Pause* of 15 minutes to *Guided Sitting Meditation and Mindfulness Discussion* of 60 minutes. For more information and to register for a session [go here](#).

## **Settling Your Mind in the Crisis by Deepak Chopra**

Learning to cope during a crisis has been vividly brought to mind for everyone in the pandemic. A time of unrest and anxiety brings out the stress response, and we all need to know how to deal with this. The current pandemic of the COVID virus has brought in its wake a different pandemic of anxiety and uncertainty.

How do people usually adapt to anxiety besides taking tranquilizers? Psychologically the two most common ways are denial and distraction. Neither is helpful. By ignoring your anxiety or doing something that takes your mind off it, you might find temporary relief. But is there something more permanent and effective? Sigmund Freud said that anxiety is like an unwelcome guest that refuses to leave. You are forced to adapt to its presence. Can you actually get this unwelcome guest to leave?

We can use an effective and very simple Yoga pose known as Shavasana where you simply lie still, breathe, and consciously relax. First, find a comfortable, quiet place to lie down on the floor, using the carpet or a yoga mat. Lying on your back, place your feet 18 inches apart with your arms at your side, palms up. Close your eyes, settle into the position, and breathe naturally.

Put your attention on your breath, feeling your chest rise and fall. On the out breath, let your lungs deflate with a sigh. Easily breathe in, then exhale with a sigh. Sense yourself becoming deeply relaxed and continue for 5 to 10 minutes. Now sink into this relaxed feeling. To exit the pose, don't just jump up and go into an activity. Easily turn and stretch as if you were waking up in the morning. Open and close your hands, then open your eyes and get up without moving quickly into activity.

This is an excerpt from an article of Deepak Chopra, to read the entire article [go here](#).

## **Check out live streaming cams to de-stress**

Sometimes having a soothing sound playing in the background can help reduce stress or having a relaxing video playing while doing paperwork. There are live cams from all over the world. Connecting to nature and watching live streams can not only be relaxing, but educational

as well. Check out this one of [West Coast Sea Nettles - Jellyfish Tank](#). The website that brings this live cam, has many other options that you could explore - check them out at [Explore.org](#).

## **Video: Hear, hear! The explosion in audio books**

"Rumor has it that you may have a little extra time at home these days. Well, here's one way to fill it: *Listening* to books! Now, in the *old* days, if you wanted to listen to a book, you bought "books on tape," which weren't what you'd call compact. Even books on compact discs weren't very compact. One Harry Potter book fills 17 CDs!" Listen to the story [Hear, Hear! The explosion in audio books](#) from CBS Sunday morning here.

## **"Why Mindfulness Matters—and Why It Might Matter to You!" by Jon Kabat-Zinn**

For over 40 years, this renowned clinician has been treating anxiety, depression, and many other mental, physical, and emotional challenges. In [Why Mindfulness Matters - And Why It Might Matter to You!](#), he explores how regular mindfulness meditation can be the answer to the stress-soaked pace of daily life. He explains that mindfulness not only alleviates stress-based symptoms, but also offers a better understanding of ourselves - mind, body, and spirit.

## **Adapting to living in isolation**

CBS Sunday morning right now is a nice break from the 'regular' news cast. It is informative and engaging with a positive vibe. Sunday, May 17th there was a short story about adapting to living in isolation that you might want to check out if you missed it. The story began...

"This time of year, baby birds not quite ready to fly are stuck in their nests, waiting for their food to be delivered. That's pretty much the way so many of us have felt lately, even as we, too, poke our heads out more and more. We used to crave silence and solitude; isolation was healing. But chances are most of us would trade peace for other people right about now." Check out this segment at [Adapting to living in isolation link](#).

## **Facing Fear with a Compassionate Heart by Elizabeth Gilbert**

Listen to the this [short talk that Elizabeth Gilbert](#) (Speaker and author - best known for her memoir EAT PRAY LOVE). Take the time to hear what Liz has to share. Learn to write yourself a letter from your unconditional love when you are experiencing fear. As you would for a good friend when they are struggling, remember these things.

- I am right here
- I have got you
- I love you

- I am not going anywhere
- and, we will get through this together

Take the time to do this action and then share with a friend. See how impactful it can be.

The [Insight Timer](#) is a great resource during this time as a place to go for mindfulness, meditation, music and calming thoughts.

## Four Universal Elements of Health and Well-Being

It's normal to stagger when the old structures are swept away. And today we have the opportunity (and, frankly, the imperative) to create new norms and daily habits. Intentionally. By design. For our well-being, and the well-being of our families and communities, we are called upon to actually *generate* sustainable structures that produce sanity, health, and human thriving.

Whether we're in generally good health or struggling with chronic physical or psychological challenges, every person needs these four things, every day:

1. **Move.** Our bodies need to move. Every day. They need to stretch, reach, twist, bend, step, sweat, to whatever degree works for our unique shapes and constitutions.
2. **Nourish.** A balanced and nutritious meal sets us up for steady energy, mood, and motivation throughout the day. This doesn't mean banning or outlawing the small treats that bring us joy, but rather setting up a daily meal structure that fills our bellies with nourishing, healthy foods.
3. **Connect.** We need to feel seen, heard, and understood by other people—and to extend the same to them in return. The developer and philanthropist James Rouse famously said, “A healthy community is a garden to grow people in.” We can create community as medicine for ourselves, our families, and our societies.
4. **Be.** Amidst all the “doing”—the preparing, protecting, adjusting, coping, responding, providing, procuring—humans need moments to simply BE. We need to pause, regularly and long enough to let our nervous system come back to baseline.

Reflect on each of these four elements. Which one would you like to do better? Make a plan that fits into your time and schedule and set a goal for the next week. Share this with a friend and do it together.

To read the entire story by Elizabeth Markle in Mindful Magazine go to [Four Universal Elements of Health and Well-Being](#)

## Why Forest Bathing Is Good for Your Health

“Nature deficit disorder” is a modern affliction. With more people living in cities and becoming addicted to electronic devices, many of us are indeed experiencing a nature deficit. This is true

for children and adults alike. Dr. Qing Li, a Japanese medical doctor, found that the average American spends 93 percent of the time indoors, and some ten hours a day on social media—more than they spend asleep.

Let's reverse these statistics – here are the five basic action steps.

- **Find a spot.** Find a good source of nature – any green area will work. In a park or outside your door.
- **Engage all your senses.** Actively listen, smell, touch, and look – use all your senses and take in what nature is offering.
- **Don't hurry.** Slow walking is recommended, and you can notice positive effects after as little as 20 minutes.
- **Try different activities.** Besides walking, try other things. Enjoy a picnic, write a poem or study the plants you encounter.
- **Appreciate the silence.** Silence is restorative, and a forest can have its own healing sound—rustling leaves, a trickle of water, birdsong. Spend a few quiet moments with a favorite tree.

Action Step: Take 20 minutes and experience forest bathing. Invite a friend or colleague to try it too and then compare how you felt afterwards.

To read entire story by Dr. Li - follow this link [Why Forest Bathing is Good for Your Health](#)

## Mindfulness Apps to try

There are several different mindfulness apps on the market today. Here are two that have free options to try.

[Insight Timer](#) - is the largest collection of free guided meditations that includes more than 30,000 titles. It has been used by more than 12 million people. The app features top meditation teachers leading classes along with choosing the length and background sound for timed meditations. There is a free option, or you can upgrade to premium for more choices.

[MyLife](#) - great option for the whole family. Good for young adults and teens plus a version for kids ages 5-10. It includes games, activities, exercises, journaling, meditations, as well as its "signature check-in" feature that ask how you're feeling in the present moment. There is a free option, or you can upgrade to have more choices.

## Why Mindfulness is a Superpower - VIDEO

Have you heard about mindfulness and wonder about the 'short answer' of what it is and why it works? This is a great short animated video (less than 3 minutes) by author Dan Harris who has written about happiness and mindfulness. Watch the ["Why Mindfulness is a Superpower" video here](#). If you want to learn more about Dan Harris and his efforts, you can find more at ["Ten Percent Happier" here](#).

## Reflection

One way to *Stay Calm* is to reflect on how things are going for you in this changing environment. Take a few minutes and reflect on the following questions. If you find it helpful, reflect on these three questions daily at the beginning or end of your day.

**What am I grateful for today?**

**What is the most important thing to me today?**

**When I become anxious, what is one thing I can do to regain a feeling of calmness?**

## S.T.O.P. Strategy

This is a simple mindfulness practice to help when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. It can take just a few minutes and you can do it anytime and anywhere, even during a meeting or interaction. Each letter stands for a step in the practice.

**S** - Stop, literally; what is happening that is causing you stress or anxiety?

**T** - Take 3 deep, slow breaths. This helps to gain clarity about what is going on.

**O** - Observe from an objective viewpoint. Describe what is *actually* happening - without emotions.

**P** - Proceed with intention and compassion. Make choices that you can control to make the situation better.

In these uncertain and changing times - your reaction is one of the few things that you still have complete control over. Print out a stop sign and put where you can see it - give it a try.

## Seven Methods to Stop the Panic

Do you find yourself glued to the TV? Wondering, what will happen next? You are not alone. The Chopra Center for Wellbeing shared an article titled ["If you are Panicking About the Coronavirus, Stop Yourself by Trying These 7 Methods"](#). If you want all seven go to the article link and see which strategies might be helpful to you or share with a friend or family member.

### ***Strategy 1 - Turn off the news for a few hours***

The article states: *The 24/7 news broadcasts are overstimulating. They create a sense of urgency. "Stay tuned" messages from the media are a way to signal that you stick around for further analysis, Q&A and more statistics that heighten anxiety. Unless you are directed to stay on top of the news in your area by state officials, due to a state of emergency, or other directives by*

*your state or government (or health care provider) turning off the news for a few hours can help you de-stimulate the brain.*