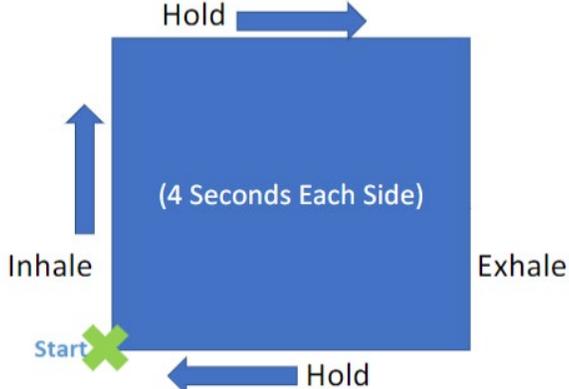


## Mindfulness Strategies

<b>Strategy:</b> Square Breathing	<b>Time:</b> ~ 5-minutes
<p><b>Explanation:</b> Square breathing is helpful in grounding yourself in the present moment and focusing on the breath. Close your eyes and imagine a square, like below. As you inhale for four seconds imagine moving up the square, followed by holding the breath for four seconds, then exhaling for four seconds moving down the side of the square, and lastly holding for four seconds. For this exercise you repeat the cycle as many times as needed. An option is to close your eyes and trace an imaginary square with your finger as you square breathe. Initially holding for four seconds for each side may be difficult, but it will get easier with time. With the long exhale, this activates your parasympathetic nervous system, reducing your heart rate and blood pressure.</p>	
	

References:

Mindful. (2020, July 8). *What is mindfulness?* <https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/>

Ponte Márquez, P. H., Feliu-Soler, A., Solé-Villa, M. J., Matas-Pericas, L., Filella-Agullo, D., Ruiz-Herrerias, M., Soler-Ribaudi, J., Roca-Cusachs Coll, A., & Arroyo-Díaz, J. A. (2019). Benefits of mindfulness meditation in reducing blood pressure and stress in patients with arterial hypertension. *Journal of Human Hypertension*, 33(3), 237–247. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41371-018-0130-6>

<b>Strategy:</b> Sitting Meditation	<b>Time:</b> Varied
<b>Resources Required:</b> None	
<p><b>Explanation:</b> For this strategy, you are seated with your eyes closed and trying to keep your mind focused on and connected to the present moment. When you find your mind wandering, bring it back to the environment that you are in and what is happening in the present. For instance, focusing on what you can hear, feel, what your body feels like, and your emotions. It is important to recognize when your mind is wandering, so you can bring it back to the present moment.</p>	

<b>Strategy:</b> Mindful Eating	<b>Time:</b> Varied
<b>Resources Required:</b> Food, such as a snack or meal.	
<p><b>Explanation:</b> For this strategy, you require food, such as food you were already going to have as a snack or part of a meal. Initially, start with some breath meditation, becoming aware of your breath, how the chair feels that you're sitting in, and noting the experiences of your senses. Then take your time to look at your food, notice the details and colouring of the item, how it feels in your hand, and the smell. Slowly bring the food to your mouth. Almost play with your food in your mouth, noticing how it feels and tastes, and very slowly begin to bite it until it disappears. If this is an unusual strategy for you, below is a video of the Raisin Meditation from the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program and an article discussing mindful eating.</p> <p>Raisin Meditation:  <a href="https://youtu.be/CZEEYMXr8Q?list=PLbiVpU59JkVaFMGi0A8Im_hfSh-SWsFwg">https://youtu.be/CZEEYMXr8Q?list=PLbiVpU59JkVaFMGi0A8Im_hfSh-SWsFwg</a>            Mouthfuls of Mindfulness Article: <a href="https://palousemindfulness.com/docs/mouthfuls-mindfulness.pdf">https://palousemindfulness.com/docs/mouthfuls-mindfulness.pdf</a></p>	

<b>Strategy:</b> Guided Visual Imagery	<b>Time:</b> 5+ minutes
<b>Resources Required:</b> Audio guides	
<p><b>Explanation:</b> This strategy guides the person through an image into a creative zone, allowing you to relax in an imaginative space instead of the past or the future. Below are some examples of audio guides to help through the strategy.</p> <p>5-minutes: <a href="https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/guided-imagery-meditation.htm">https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/guided-imagery-meditation.htm</a>            10-mintues: <a href="https://youtu.be/6BSIx8tCISk">https://youtu.be/6BSIx8tCISk</a></p>	

**Strategy:** Progressive Muscle Relaxation

**Time:** 10+ Minutes

**Resources Required:** Can be done independently, or with an audio guide

**Explanation:** For this strategy, you are tensing various muscle groups one at a time. You focus on the muscle group while it is tensed and then released. It can be helpful to be either in a sitting or lying position and start with your feet and move up your body. Below are some example audio guides to help through the strategy.

10-minutes: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Alberta%20Images/Audio-Tracks/progressive-muscle-relaxation.mp3>

15-minutes: <https://youtu.be/912eRrbes2g>

15-minutes: <https://youtu.be/86HUcX8ZtAk>

15-minutes: <https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/progressive-muscle-relaxation-meditation.htm>

30-minutes: [https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/sites/students\\_wellness\\_center.prod/files/p\\_muscle\\_relax.mp3](https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/sites/students_wellness_center.prod/files/p_muscle_relax.mp3)

## Mindfulness Resources

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction:** This is an 8-week clinical program that has been found to improve individuals' mental health by integrating mindfulness into one's daily life (Fjorback et al., 2011). There is a link below that offers the program for free, which includes all the resources from the program.

- <https://palousemindfulness.com/>

### Free Applications:

- **Balance App:** This app offers a free one-year trial and includes a large meditation library with personalized options for meditations.
  - <https://balanceapp.com/>
- **UCLA Guided Meditations:** A free meditation app that includes a limited number of meditations ranging from 3-19minutes, but also has longer meditations released weekly as "podcasts". There is no paid option.
  - <https://www.uclahealth.org/programs/marc/free-guided-meditations/drop-meditations-hammer-podcast>

### Additional Resources for Mental Health/Mindfulness Education

- <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/types-of-meditation#mantra-meditation>
- <https://www.sportskeeda.com/health-and-fitness/seven-reasons-prioritizing-mental-health-essential-overall-well-being>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>
- <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/less-stress-clearer-thoughts-with-mindfulness-meditation/>
- <https://www.mindfulnessunleashed.com/community-and-blog/the-4-ts-of-mindfulness/>
- <https://oconnorpg.com/blog/importance-prioritizing-mental-health/>

### References

Fjorback, L. O., Arendt, M., Ørnbøl, E., Fink, P., & Walach, H. (2011). Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy - a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 124(2), 102-119.  
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