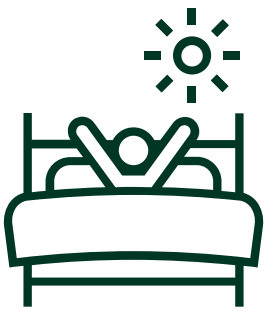


nature mindfulness and wellbeing

Take a step back and slow down with these mindfulness activities.

Morning practice



Next time you wake up, experiment with this simple mindful exercise to start your day.

Before you get out of bed, start your day by noticing what sounds you can hear around you.

Pay attention to the feeling of your body lying in bed and your chest rising and falling with each breath.

Acknowledge what a joy it is to be alive, as if you are tapping into your childlike wonder for existence.

Nature mandala



Mandala is a Sanskrit word which loosely translates to 'circle'. It is often used in ceremonial rituals to represent wholeness and symbolise the cosmos. As a meditative practice, mandalas have been used across Eastern traditions and in Western psychotherapy for a variety of purposes.

A nature mandala is useful for stimulating a sense of connection to the outside world and our creativity. It can bring about a feeling of calm.

For this project, head into your backyard and collect materials to make your own mandala. Use a variety of leaves and seeds.

Settle into the process of creation by taking a few deep breaths.

Arrange the mandala in mindful silence. Practice noticing how your body moves as you place each object in the mandala. Pay close attention to the colours, textures, sensations passing through you.

When you have finished, take a moment to register how you are feeling. Has anything changed?

Also take a moment to appreciate the amazing art you just created!



Nature journaling



Nature journaling is the process of drawing or writing in response to observing nature. It is a great excuse to get outdoors more often!

Your toolbox can consist of as many or little art materials as you have on hand.

Go for a walk outside and see what inspires you.

Maybe write a haiku based on what you see or collect flowers and leaves to press, paint or colour.

Perhaps draw what you can see in front of you, or just a mixture of colours you're inspired by.

Art therapy



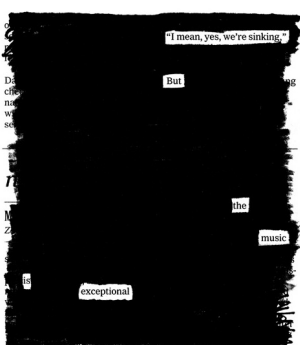
Gather whatever art supplies you have lying around the house and start creating!

Set a question to explore for your practice. Perhaps, what emotions are coming up for me? Or, what is important to me right now?

Approach this with a sense of open curiosity for what is unfolding moment to moment. Allow your hands to do the talking, moving with no thought for what the end product is going to be.

When you have finished, take note of what you are feeling and observe what information your art has to show you.

Blackout poetry



Take an old magazine, newspaper, book that is lying around the house and a black marker.

Start blanking out words to form a poem or a story from the remaining words and letters.

You can plan the poem or let it come out organically.

Once you have finished, you can use paint, pens or craft supplies to create a piece of art, or let the words speak for themselves.

Newspaper Blackout Poetry by Austin Kleon
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/carlagates247/5597844663/in/photostream/>

Soothing yoga poses

With yoga it is always important to listen to your body and only do what feels right. Don't push yourself into any pose as it will result injury. Here are two of our favourite poses for calming the nervous system, while still getting a good stretch at the same time! There are yoga classes on youtube if you would like some more poses. Be kind to your body, stay safe.

Child's Pose

Balasana



Get down on your hands and knees.

Spread your knees wider than your hips, with your big toes touching, so it's like you have formed a V with your legs.

Lower your hips to your heels.

Bending at the waist, reach forward with your arms until your head is resting on the ground and your arms are outstretched in front of you.

Hold pose for up to 3 minutes.

Pose Benefits

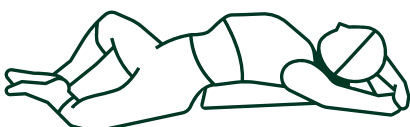
Helps to stretch the hips, thighs, and ankles.

Centers, calms, and soothes the brain reducing stress.

Helps relieve back and neck pain.

Reclined Bound Angle Pose

Supta Baddha Konasana



Set up a firm pillow (or pillows staked on top of each other) on the floor.

Sit at the short end of the pillows facing away from them. It should be set up so if you were to lie down, the pillows would run up your back.

Bring the soles of your feet together, creating a diamond shape. Keeping your feet together, lean your torso slowly backwards onto your pillows. Use your hands to lower yourself safely down.

Allow your arms to rest at your sides or on your hips.

Hold the pose for at least 5 minutes. Try to stay connected with the breath, expanding and receiving with each inhale, softening and letting go with each exhale, feeling the body relax with each breath.

Pose Benefits:

Increases blood circulation in the lower abdomen.

Can improve digestion.

Stretches the inner thighs.

Increases range of external rotation in the hips.

Calms the nervous system.