

## The 'ACT In A Nutshell' Mindfulness Exercise

1. I invite you now to find a comfortable position, and you might like to gently push your feet into the floor, and get a sense of the ground beneath you ... and just fix your eyes on a spot.
2. And you might also like to sit upright, with your back straight, and let your shoulders drop. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
3. And get a sense of gravity flowing down your spine, anchoring you to the ground, to the floor beneath your feet. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
4. And just take a moment to notice what you can see. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
5. And notice what you can hear. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
6. And notice how you are sitting. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
7. And notice what you are doing with your hands. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
8. And notice the sensations in your nose and mouth. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
9. And notice what you are feeling in your body. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
10. And notice what you are thinking right now. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
11. And take a moment to recognize there's a part of you in there that is able to notice, or be aware of, everything that you do – everything that you see, hear, touch, taste, smell, think and feel.(PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
12. For the sake of simplicity, let's call this part of you 'awareness'.
13. And I invite you now to close your eyes, or keep them fixed on a spot – whichever you prefer – and to bring your awareness to your breathing. (PAUSE 5 SECONDS)
14. And for the next few breaths, I'd like you to completely empty your lungs - to push all the air out of them, until there is no more left - and then allow them to fill by themselves.
15. And as you do that, I'd like you to observe your breathing as if you're a curious scientist, who has never encountered breathing before. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
16. Notice how once the lungs are empty, they refill all by themselves; you can take a deep breath in if you want to, but see if you can notice how there's really no need – it just happens by itself. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
17. Notice your breath flowing in and out. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
18. Notice your chest moving in and moving out. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
19. Notice your abdomen, rising and falling. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
20. And now I'd like you to reflect on why you came here today. There is something that matters to you, something that is important, deep in your heart, that motivated you to come here. What is it? ... Is it about improving your life? ... Personal growth? ... Learning new skills? ... Building better relationships? .... Being a better \_\_\_\_\_ ? (INSERT RELEVANT ROLE: eg mother, wife, friend) .... Is it about using your time on this planet more effectively – to help others, or to help yourself, or both? ... Is it about work, or family, or friendship? ... Is it about your health, vitality, wellbeing? ... Is it about learning how to look after yourself? .. To treat yourself well? ... To regain something you've lost? ... Or come to terms with something painful? ... Just do a search, inside your heart, to clarify why you came here. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
21. And now, take a moment to reflect on how you got here today. You didn't magically materialize out of thin air. You had to take action. You had to organize the appointment. You had to reschedule things. You had to make time for it amongst all the other important things you have to do. You had to (INDIVIDUALIZE TO YOUR CLIENT: eg. take public transport/ get in your car ... fork out some hard-earned money/ organize an appointment/ get a referral etc.) (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)

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22. And recognize that right now you are also taking action – you are sitting here in a chair, doing this exercise, not knowing exactly what it involves – you probably have all sorts of thoughts whizzing through your head – and all sorts of feelings passing through your body – and yet here you are, sitting in the chair, right here, right now, doing this exercise. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS) And what is it that matters enough to you to bring you here today, to take this action, right here, right now, when there are so many other things you could be doing instead?
23. And now, once again, I’d like you to bring your awareness to your breathing, and observe it as if you’re a curious scientist, who has never encountered breathing before. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
24. Notice your breath flowing in and out. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
25. Notice your chest moving in and moving out. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
26. Notice your abdomen, rising and falling. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
27. And I invite you now to undertake a challenge: for the next few minutes, your challenge is to keep your attention on your breath, observing it as it flows in and out. This will be hard, because your mind will try to distract you. It will tell you all sorts of stories to try and grab your attention, and pull you away from what you are doing. Your challenge is to see if you can let those thoughts come and go like passing cars, and keep your attention on the breath. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
28. Let your mind chatter away as if it a radio playing in the background, and keep your attention on the breath. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
29. Notice your breath flowing in and out. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
30. Notice your abdomen, rising and falling. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
31. From time to time your mind will succeed in distracting you; it will manage to get you interested in one of its stories, and you will lose track of your breathing. This is quite normal – happens to everyone – and it will happen repeatedly. The moment you realize this has happened, take a split-second to acknowledge it and note what distracted you, then gently refocus on your breathing. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
32. Just noticing the breath. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
33. Letting thoughts come and go like passing cars. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
34. Again and again your mind will succeed in distracting you. This is normal. This is what minds do. So as soon as you realize it, note the distraction, then gently refocus on your breath. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
35. As this exercise continues, the feelings and sensations in your body will change. There may be pleasant feelings and sensations showing up – like relaxation, calm, peacefulness – and there may be unpleasant ones – like boredom, frustration, anxiety, or back ache. See if you can allow those feelings to be exactly as they are in this moment. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
36. Don’t try to control your feelings, just let them be – regardless of whether they are pleasant or unpleasant – and keep your attention on your breathing. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
37. This is not a relaxation technique. You are not trying to relax. The aim is to allow yourself to feel whatever you are feeling, without a struggle. So if there is an unpleasant feeling present, then silently name it. Say to yourself, ‘*Here’s a feeling of boredom*’. Or ‘*Here’s a feeling of anxiety*.’ Acknowledge it’s there, and keep your attention on your breathing. (PAUSE 20 SECONDS)
38. Again and again and again, bringing your awareness back to your breath (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)

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39. And now expanding your awareness: noticing your breathing *and* your body in the chair – your arms, legs, head, neck, chest and tummy. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
40. And expanding your awareness even further: noticing your breathing *and* your body in the chair *and* all the sounds around you *and* opening your eyes, and looking around the room and noticing what you can see. (PAUSE 10 SECONDS)
41. And expanding your awareness even further: noticing also what you can feel ... and also what you can taste or sense in your nose and your mouth.
42. And having a stretch now ... and noticing yourself stretching
43. And noticing what you are thinking right now ... noticing whatever your mind is saying to you about this experience.
44. And taking a moment to realize that there is a part of you that notices everything you do .... everything you see, and hear, and touch and taste, and smell, and think and feel
45. And just check in for a moment – this part of you that can notice your thoughts, notice your feelings, notice your body – is it 'good' or 'bad' – or is it 'just there'? (PAUSE: No answer is necessary, but usually they will say 'just there'.)
46. Thank you very much. That brings the exercise to an end. Let's have another stretch, and then talk about it.