

MIND OVER MATTER

Mindfulness isn't about making all your thoughts and worries disappear. It's about acknowledging they are there and that they will pass.

It can be difficult living with diabetes and you may worry or be anxious about the future. Practising mindfulness allows you to be in the present rather than worrying about the past or future. An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with your body and the sensations you experience.

DiABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

LIVE IN THE MOMENT

Paying attention to sensations – for example, the food you eat or the air moving past your body as you walk – can interrupt the ‘autopilot’ mode we often engage in day to day, and can open you up to new perspectives. Try putting aside past regrets and future worries and concentrate instead on what’s happening right now. Focus on what you can see and hear, think about how things feel against your skin – like water from the shower, for example – and think about how things smell or taste. No matter what you’re doing, give it your undivided focus. You could think to yourself, “this coffee feels warm on my lips, and it smells nice.”



VIEW THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat than usual or going somewhere new for a walk or to eat, can help you notice the world in a new way. Perhaps you usually exercise alone but might want to try a class with other people. Or would like to try a new recipe. Trying something different might boost your confidence and mean you find new things to enjoy.

DON'T JUDGE YOURSELF TOO HARSHLY

When you live with diabetes, it's important to get a balance between looking after yourself and not putting too much pressure on yourself to do everything perfectly. At times of stress, try to treat yourself kindly. If you're extra busy at work or looking after family, forgetting to eat or take medication can happen. It may help to say out loud, "I am human, and it's OK not to be perfect". If you don't feel comfortable saying it out loud, you could write it down on a sticky note and add it to your mirror as a daily reminder. The more you say these mantras, the more you believe them.



NAME YOUR FEARS

To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to name them silently: "Here's the thought that my blood sugars are too high". Or, "This is anxiety that I'm going to have a hypo."

Rather than fight negative feelings, it's better to try to work with them instead. If you're feeling stressed or anxious, acknowledge that it is there and that it's your body's way of telling you something might be wrong. You could try observing what you're feeling and telling yourself it will pass. Some people find it easier to cope with an over-busy mind if they are doing an activity such as yoga or walking.



LOOK FOR COPING MECHANISMS

Try to develop an awareness of the stream of thoughts and feelings that diabetes makes you experience. Ask yourself: "Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just getting caught up in my thoughts?" By creating distance from your thoughts, you can start to see their patterns. Gradually, you can train yourself to notice when your thoughts are taking over and realise that these are just thoughts – they don't have to control you.

