Speaker 1 ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.21)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program, keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=10.34)):

A recent [Stress in America](https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/index) survey by the American Psychological Association finds that Americans have been more stressed out in the past year than in previous years. This has taken a toll on people's physical and mental health. One practice that can help people to manage their stress and improve their overall well-being is mindfulness. I’m Emily Yeap.

[Rhonda Lesley](https://search.missouristate.edu/people/rhondalesley), the [Counseling Center](https://counselingcenter.missouristate.edu/) director at Missouri State University, joins me today to share about mindfulness and its positive effects.

Rhonda Lesley ([00:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=41.27)):

Mindfulness is really a very simple concept. It's paying attention in the present moment … paying attention to an object or your breath or something in front of you you're looking at et cetera. Being mindful is just being very aware of whatever is here and now.

Emily Yeap ([00:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=59.93)):

Being mindful can be tough when you're busy or can't focus. Practice and discipline are key.

Rhonda Lesley ([01:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=66.11)):

It’s good if you intentionally set aside some time every day and it doesn't have to be much time, it can be 30 seconds or a minute, but that daily practice seems to be really important for anyone to get the benefits of mindfulness. Certainly five minutes is probably better than one minute. You could just spend a few minutes every morning on the side of the bed, for example. Maybe the first thing you do when you get out of bed, you stretch and yawn, and then you just sit on the side of the bed and become aware of how your body feels or perhaps how you're breathing in that moment, or even of your thoughts. Perhaps you have a stressful day ahead and immediately your mind is kind of taking off and almost controlling you in a way. So you have the ability to sit on the edge of the bed, acknowledge the thoughts you're having.

You don't want to try to push away the thoughts or stop the thoughts. The awareness piece is key to mindfulness. So you're becoming aware of your thoughts or your emotions or how your body's feeling in that moment, in this example, anyway, and then bring your mind to your breath and just notice how you're breathing and try to release, just let the thoughts kind of be and let them go. I kind of like to think of it as letting the thoughts go to the background. It's not like you're pushing them away or stopping them. You're just focusing more on something different.

Emily Yeap ([02:](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=59.93)30):

Lesley shares a couple of ways to be mindful.

Rhonda Lesley ([02:](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=66.11)33):

Well, it could be, you're taking five minutes on your lunch break and instead of eating, you're watching your breath and noticing how you're breathing and making changes if you want to make those changes. Or perhaps you're being very mindful with how you're eating, the experience of actually eating the apple or maybe have a handful of nuts or raisins or whatever.

And you're just very mindfully aware as you're engaging in that activity. Most of us might just take the whole handful of raisins and pop them in our mouth, and a minute later, we're wondering, did we even eat those raisins because our mind is already off onto something else. And we know that it's much more effective to really process those raisins, to eat more slowly. It's a totally different experience when you're mindful versus when your mindless, I guess.

Emily Yeap ([03:](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=59.93)22):

How does mindfulness benefit us?

Rhonda Lesley ([03:](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=66.11)24):

There are a couple of interesting studies around what mindfulness does. Specifically, I'm thinking of a study related to college students where the students, again, intentionally practice mindfulness. This was not just a one-time deal. They were practicing at least I think it was 30 minutes of mindfulness a day plus additional longer sessions of mindfulness. For those students who did that, the study showed improved empathy, improved communication, coping with stress and even negative thoughts tended to diminish, feeling more resilient in general and having a sense of emotional well-being are some of the benefits I remember. And then in another study, just looking at some of the health benefits and they were able to show that people who practice mindfulness had reduced levels of inflammatory markers in their blood. So it can be very powerful.

Speaker 2 ([04:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=258.63)):

For people feeling extra anxious during these trying times, Lesley suggests trying mindfulness.

Rhonda Lesley ([04:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=265.44)):

I think being mindful of whatever is currently right in front of you, paying attention to that, being aware, not judging yourself for some of those thoughts that you were having, or the way that you've been feeling can definitely bring you better presence and better presence in anything you're doing is a really positive thing. It just lets some of those worrisome thoughts or the tension and anxiety fade to the background so you can more productive.

Emily Yeap ([04:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=292.02)):

A helpful resource to learn more about mindfulness is [mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org/). I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Speaker 1 ([05:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/6tMpeVKhXEfIB9H5-BrX1cXR6sNZt7_oNezugRFmnW9fg7ZbTLe6F6I4WXS5okS-m9C5VOTcF_-nW_AKUqYKkn6Z9yI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=300)):

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