

[WISDOM](#) // March 15, 2019

10 Mindfulness Habits That Will Make You More Successful at Work

It's all about focus.

By [Marina Khidekel](#), Head of Content Development at Thrive Global



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We've all heard the buzz around [mindfulness](#) and its well-being benefits.

As [Andy Puddicombe](#), the co-founder and voice of the app Headspace, [explained in *The Boston Globe*](#), "Strip it back and

mindfulness, at its core, simply means to be present, aware, undistracted, and not lost in thought. Rather than fumbling through life's daily highs and lows in the dark, it's the equivalent of turning on the light and seeing everything more clearly," he said. "Given that researchers at Harvard found that, on average, we are lost in thought almost 47 percent of the time, this is by no means insignificant."

Mindfulness can help improve our relationship with ourselves and our surroundings, and it has particular benefits at work: It improves our job satisfaction and reduces emotional exhaustion, according to a widely cited study in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

But when we're pulled in so many different directions at the office, this might seem unrealistic or unattainable. So we asked members of the Thrive Global community for their favorite simple practices for being more mindful on the job.

Replace "I have to" with "I get to"

"Saying 'I get to' instead of 'I have to' completely changes your mindset and brings gratitude to all that you do. Give it a try. It will increase your happiness and gratitude for all you 'get' to do. I 'get to' go to work, instead of I 'have to' go to work. #gamechanger."

—Sue Cooper, owner, Lazy Dog Adventures, Key West, Florida

Rethink your to-do list

"When you get to work, make your 'to *be*' list instead of your 'to *do*' list. Your 'to *be*' list is exactly that — what am I *being* as I am doing my job? Contemplate that one. Am I being patient? Am I being compassionate? Am I being a good listener? It's a moment to moment awareness. Your 'to *be*' list is so much more important than your 'to *do*' list. When challenges occur, ask yourself: am I more concerned with being right and winning the argument or is it my priority to find a solution? When you come from a place of acting from your heart, your defenses will come down as well as your stress levels."

—Camille Sacco, certified meditation instructor and author, Winter Park, FL

Let gratitude ground you in the present

"I've found practicing gratitude throughout the day is my best tool for mindfulness at work. I set reminders for three random checkpoints in the day, stop what I am doing when they sound, and jot down the things I am most grateful for in that moment. This mindful mental

break has completely shifted how I work (and made me happier in the hustle)."

—Katelyn Pfeffer, fitness studio manager and coach, Little Rock, AR

Take an hourly break

"I make sure I allow myself to just be for a minute, every hour. I take an intentional mindful break on the clock and just *stop*. This kind of intentional pause makes me aware of any, unsaid emotion or subconscious thought that I may be holding. It gives me the space to release what may be holding me back from being in the zone, and reset my mindful intentions and goals."

—Shilpi Mahajan, founder, Fablefy, NJ

Zero in on the details

"It is one thing at a time. One person at a time. Bringing mindfulness at work means to be present in everything you do. Opening the door: Feel the handle, go, close the door. Waiting at the coffee machine? Time for a short breathing exercise. Take advantage of every small opportunity along the day to stop, breathe, and reset your brain."

—Corinna Cremer, company consultant, Berlin, Germany

Pause before reacting

"I practice mindfulness by doing my best, throughout my day, to insert a pause between a trigger and my response. Sitting with feelings and emotions helps me out as well; if I'm feeling frustrated by an email, meeting, or conversation, I try and work through it in my mind, flipping perspectives and reflecting on my attachment to it."

—Megan Garheart, corporate recruiter, Baltimore, MD

Keep a gratitude journal

"One of the first things I do each morning is a [journaling exercise](#) I developed to use gratitude as rocket fuel. Steps include listing everything I'm grateful for and then with the powerful positive resonance of that list, I set my intentions for the day ahead — sometimes it is about slowing down to prioritize what really matters at work, ensuring that self-care is getting as much attention as my deadlines, making time to advance my book project as well as my corporate deliverables, etc. Doing this each day makes me grateful when I enter the office and helps me recalibrate how to handle

stressful situations in a mindful manner. Then I start the process over again the next morning by acknowledging wins from the previous day as positive reinforcement.”

—Shira Miller, chief communications officer, Atlanta, GA

Take a deep breath before diving into a task

“When the phone rings, I remind myself to take a deep breath before I answer. The same before responding to an email, especially if it’s something seemingly unpleasant or the client is haggling too much. I currently work from home, so there can be a lot of interruptions. Instead of getting annoyed, which I still do at times, I try to use the interruption to bring myself to the present moment, take a deep breath and then address the situation. Mindfulness also helps me become aware of my posture (less slouching), take breaks to stand and stretch and also to drink water.”

—Grazilia Almeida, health coach and associate editor, India

Start off slow

“I start my day slowly as I drink my tea. For at least 30 minutes, I focus on the warmth and taste of the tea. This single action enables me not to multitask. I note where the lightness of the sky or the brightness of the sun. I am being in my day. It may not always be peaceful and serene, but most of the time is spent taking deep breaths and keeping calm. I make a list of the things I produced yesterday in my calendar journal and then I am off — to writing, email, paying bills, eating, and exercise. My pace is slow and I notice more of the world around me. I can tell I am in this space when I speak and interact with others in a modulated manner and tone.”

—Sidonna Bright, psychotherapist, Savannah, Georgia

Pause between different types of tasks

“Practice the pause. Taking a brief break of closing my eyes and to take a few slow deep breaths between different types of tasks, especially those that shift from using a different part of the brain, like writing and creating versus long meetings, doing budgets, graphs, or phone calls. It’s super helpful to creating an energetic shift so you can feel a renewed mental and physical energy.”

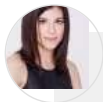
—Donna Nelson, holistic empowerment coach, Mountain Top, PA

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Marina Khidekel, **Head of Content Development at Thrive Global**

Marina leads strategy, ideation and execution of Thrive Global content company-wide, including cross-platform brand partnership campaigns, editorial tentpoles and partnerships, and the voice of the Thrive app. In her role, she helps people tell their personal stories of going from surviving to thriving, brings Thrive's audience actionable, science-backed tips for reducing stress and improving their physical and mental well-being, and shares those insights on panels, at conferences, and in national outlets like NBC's TODAY.

Previously, Marina held senior editorial roles at *Women's Health*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour*, where she edited award-winning health and mental health features and spearheaded the campaigns and partnerships around them.

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