

# THRIVING TIMES; Your Health and Wellness Dispatch

October 2024 – Be kind to your mind

## Welcome to October's Edition about Mindfulness & Mental Health



As the leaves begin to turn and the air starts to cool, October offers a perfect opportunity to turn inward and focus on our mental well-being. This month, we celebrate World Mental Health Day on October 10th, a day dedicated to raising awareness and taking time to shine a spotlight on mental health, with a focus on workplace mental health this year. However, that is just one day of the year so with a view to building positive habits I invite you to focus this month on mindfulness—its benefits, practices, and how to incorporate it into daily life to enhance our mental well-being.

### What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and engaged in the current moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings without distraction or judgement. It can sometime be used interchangeably with meditation and people might be put off that you need to sit crossed legged for hours on end. That's not it at all – you can do any activity mindfully, be it emptying the dishwasher, brushing your teeth, eating a meal or going for a walk.

Studies have shown that mindfulness can reduce stress, enhance emotional regulation, and improve overall mental health and because it's so easy to bring into daily life there's nothing in the way to giving it a try! Like anything worth doing it takes time and commitment, but it will pay off. Brain scans have shown that the first attempt of mindfulness shows positive results on the brain, but it will take a while for you to feel and notice the benefits.

### Key Benefits of Mindfulness:

- Reduces Stress: By focusing on the present, mindfulness helps break the cycle of stress and anxiety.
- Improves Focus and Concentration: Regular mindfulness practice strengthens attention and concentration.
- Enhances Emotional Health: Mindfulness fosters greater emotional awareness and regulation.

- **Promotes Better Sleep:** Mindfulness can improve sleep quality by calming the mind before bed.
- **Weight management:** When we are less stressed our bodies don't store any and all calories "just in case", so weight management, which may include weight loss is easier.

## Mindfulness in Daily Life

Integrating mindfulness into your daily routine doesn't require significant time or effort. Here are some simple ways to incorporate mindfulness into your everyday life:

1. **Mindful Mornings:** Start your day with a few minutes of mindful breathing, if this appeals then check out this short exercise, you can also do it at other times of the day. Give up just a few minutes to sit quietly and focusing on your breath, or the sensations in your body.
  - Find a Quiet Space: Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
  - Focus on Your Breath: Pay attention to the sensation of your breath entering and leaving your body.
  - Observe Your Thoughts: Notice your thoughts as they come and go, without judgment.
  - Return to Your Breath: When your mind wanders, gently bring your focus back to your breath. You haven't failed if your mind wanders, this is normal, noticing and gently bringing it back IS mindfulness.
2. **Mindful Eating:** Pay attention to the flavours, textures, and sensations of your food. If you'd like to explore this practice here is a short guided mindful exercise which will most likely be the best tasting [strawberry](#) you've ever had!!



3. **Mindful Walking:** Take a walk and notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you. All too often we're in a rush, we have somewhere to be. If we were to stop and think about the journey we wouldn't remember much of it. Your mission on this journey is to be present and notice all it has to offer.
4. **Mindful Listening:** Give your full attention to the person you are talking to, without planning your response while they are speaking. It is a beautiful gift to give someone.

## Mindfulness Exercises & Techniques

Here are a few mindfulness exercises to explore this month:

- **Body Scan:** Lie down and mentally scan your body from head to toe, noticing any tension or discomfort, don't bring any judgement, just notice and then move on, this should take about 5 minutes.

- **Five Senses Exercise:** I love this as a way to properly engage with all of our sense, they're all working but we often don't notice them, let's change that. Instead pause and notice five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.
- **Loving-Kindness exercise:** Focus on sending positive thoughts and wishes to yourself and others.

Thank you for being a part of our The Thriving Time community. Wishing you a mindful and peaceful October, and beyond!

This month's recipe is all about choice, encouraging you to think about what you'd like to delight your senses with and this would be a great way to use the Five senses exercise. Introducing the **Pick and Mix salad...**



**PICK A BASE (2 LARGE HANDFULS - SERVES 1):**

Spinach/ shredded lettuce/ kale

**PICK A CARBOHYDRATE:**

½ boiled sweet potato/ 50g (dry weight) cooked quinoa/ 50g pre-cooked lentils

**PICK 2 VEGETABLES:**

½ bell pepper/ 80g broccoli or cauliflower/ handful sugar snap peas/ 2 inch chunk cucumber/ handful cherry tomatoes/ 2 sticks celery/ 3 mushrooms/ ¼ avocado/ ½ red onion

**PICK A PROTEIN (AROUND 100G):**

Chicken/ turkey/ salmon/ prawns/ tuna/ tofu/ feta/ halloumi/ ½ can of chickpeas or beans.

**PICK A DRESSING:**

Mediterranean: 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar, 1 tsp fresh parsley (or dried), black pepper to taste.

Asian: 1 tbsp sesame seed oil, 1 tsp Tamari, 1 tsp sesame seeds, finely chopped spring onion.

Middle Eastern: 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, 1 tbsp Tahini, black pepper to taste.

Top tip, if you're using a mason jar or similar to make lunch for the next day be sure to put the dressing at the bottom to stop anything going soggy overnight. Then gently tumble the ingredients before serving.

I like to signpost you each month to extra resources if you feel inspired to explore the monthly topic further. A lovely book I've read and will share is called "Why Mindfulness is better than Chocolate" By David Michie. Something better than chocolate?! Who'd have thought it!

I'm also happy to sign post you to B-Corp company [World of Books](#) who rehome preloved books, their B-Corp certification means they meet the highest standards of social and environmental impact. So a purchase from them could be great for your mind, your pocket and the environment, what's not to like.

Before I sign off for another month I have limited availability for my 1:1 programmes but wanted to give my Thriving Times community first refusal. If you'd like to accept my gift of a complimentary call with me here is my invitation to you...



**YOUR PERSONAL INVITATION**

Accept my gift of a complimentary 40 minute WELLth check call to explore how you can feel happy & healthy, regain hope and the control to lead a full life, now and beyond.

**SAMANTHA FORD**  
CERTIFIED HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACH

REGISTERED HEALTH COACH  
ICA CERTIFIED

www.UniqueWellth.coach  
Samantha@UniqueWellth.coach

You can use the link [here](#) or head over to my [website](#) if you prefer, I look forward to gifting you a safe space to start exploring your health and wellness journey.

**Best wishes to you for a mindful October and beyond**

