**16 SIMPLE MINDFULNESS EXERCISES TO CONNECT WITH YOUR INNER SELF**

**MINDFUL HAND AWARENESS EXERCISE**

Grasp your hands really tight and hold for 5 to 10 seconds, then release and pay attention to how your hands feel. Keep your attention focused on the feeling for as long as you can. **MENTAL FOCUS EXERCISE**

Stare at any object and try to remain focused on just that object for as long as possible. Keep a mental watch on when your mind starts to wander, then just bring it back to the object. The longer you can remain focused, the more your mindfulness will increase.

**TACTILE EXERCISE**

Pinch your arm and pay close attention to how it feels and what emotions you begin feeling. Pay attention to the pain it causes, and how it radiates out from the site where you pinch. This exercise can really tune you into how your body deals with discomfort and what emotions rise. Do you get angry when you feel pain? Think about why.

**MUSICAL STIMULI EXERCISE**

Listen to your favourite song and pay attention to how it makes you feel. What emotions stir? What memories come up, and how do those memories make you feel? Engage the emotions and see where they lead.

**OLFACTORY SENSE EXERCISE**

Smell something strong like coffee beans or an essential oil and pay close attention to what happens in your nose, and then what feelings these scents evoke.

**MELTING EXERCISE**

Sit and relax, and imagine yourself melting into everything around you. You might begin to feel at one with everything after some practice.

**FULL SENSORY AWARENESS EXERCISE**

Wherever you are, just stop and look around when it is safe to do so. Become aware of everything that your senses pick up. How do you feel? Do you feel over-stimulated? Do you feel anxious? Pick up visuals, smells, sounds, etc.

**SILENCE EXERCISE**

Spend an hour or two in complete silence, and just absorb your surroundings. Earplugs might help with this exercise.

**“I” EXERCISE**

Become aware of every time you use the word “I” in a sentence. This forces us to focus on how self-centred we all are. This exercise would be something like “I was shocked when I started doing this…”.

**CHALLENGE YOUR BELIEFS EXERCISE**

Take one long-held belief and pretend that you believe the opposite. Make a mental note of how you feel and what thoughts come into your mind. The goal is not to play devils advocate to test your strength but to stay neutral to opposing opinions.

**CAUSE AND EFFECT EXERCISE**

Contemplate cause and effect for everything that you do for some pre-determined amount of time. This means to think about your actions and how it affects you and the people around you and what changes you want to enter to reverse negative effects.

**THE MINDFUL PLOT EXERCISE**

Watch a movie and observe how you become engrossed in the story. Take mental notes of your emotions as you watch the film.

**UNDIVIDED ATTENTION EXERCISE**

Do something around the house that you’ve never done before and do it while paying utter and undivided attention. Sometimes when we cook, or clean we tend to think of some deep thoughts, and it happens so naturally. Routine or day-to-day activities are the times when the mind wanders. This often leads to the birth of thoughts, so try to do something with undivided attention and focus just doing that ONE activity!