

Time Considerations

AAP mindfulness practice class activities can be offered daily, weekly or biweekly. The classes can be offered for a full class period of 40 minutes, or for a 30-, 20-, or 10-minute portion of the class. The key is continuous practice and repetition both in the classroom and in the student's personal life. Depending on the time available for the class, the following time allocations might be followed.

Exercises	Minutes of Each Class			
	3	6	9	10
<i>Mindfulness reminder and smile</i>	3	6	9	10
<i>Breathing</i>	1	2	3	5
<i>Physical Activity</i>	3	6	9	15
<i>Sensory Activity</i>	3	6	9	10
Total Minutes for Class	10	20	30	40

Essentials of Curriculum

Each activity is geared toward directing students to focus on what they are *aware of in the experience*. The facilitator is continually reminding the students to pay attention to their breath, their thoughts, or some other element(s) of their current experience. Following are some essential elements of each class session:

- Each class begins with a discussion of mindfulness.
- Students practice a breathing exercise (e.g., count breaths, three part breath)
- Students practice a physical exercise (e.g., stretching, dancing, walking)
- Students practice a sensory activity (e.g., noticing smells, sounds)

Sample Activities

MINDFULNESS DISCUSSION

How did you use mindfulness this week?

What are words to describe mindfulness?

What are you aware of today?

BREATHING EXERCISES

Three part breath

1. Get comfortable, sit with your back straight and chest lifted or lie down on your back.
2. Slowly take the breath in through your nose.
3. Notice how the breath moves from the lungs from your tummy, ribs, chest and shoulders. Notice your belly filling up like a balloon.
4. When you exhale, let the breath ooze out of your lungs slowly, like a balloon losing its air, until they are empty.

BREATHING EXERCISES

Ocean breath (Ujaii)

1. Get comfortable, sit with your back straight and chest lifted or lie down on your back.
2. Slowly take the breath in through your nose.
3. Let the breath out keeping your mouth closed making the ahhhhh sound (feel the back of your throat pushing while making the ocean sound).
4. Try taking in longer breaths and longer exhalations as long as you're comfortable.
5. Listen to your personal ocean, imagine your own boat, and let the waves sweep you away.

Counting breaths

1. For one minute, count how many breaths you take. One breath equals an inhalation plus an exhalation. Go around circle and say how many breaths each person took.
2. For one minute listen to all sounds outside of yourself that you hear and write them down. Go around circle and share.
3. For one minute, listen to all the sounds you hear inside yourself, such as stomach growling, swallowing, etc. Write down each sound you hear. Go around circle and share.
4. Count your breaths again for 60 seconds. Has it changed from the first time we did the exercise?

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Yoga stretches/positions (see Appendix B for selected examples)

Body Scan

Guide students to pay attention to each body part while staying with the breath: feet, ankles, calves, shins, knees, thighs, hips, belly, neck, back, arms, and throat. Instruct students to notice what's happening as student moves their attention along the body.

Movement Activities (see Appendix B for selected examples)

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Aromatherapy

Make groups of 4 to 6 students. Each makes three columns on a piece of paper. Label the first column "thoughts," the second column "body" and the third column "feelings/emotions." Pass around different scents and, after smelling each, write down what the smell made you think of in the first column, how the smell made your body feel in the second column, and in the third column what feelings or emotions the smell may have triggered. Share with one another your responses.

Listening to sounds

For 2 minutes, pay attention to sounds you hear.

Stand outside classroom—smell, feel, touch, taste the air

Listen to the sounds of your breath

Bring in various types of fabric; feel and see the differences

Bring in various types of food; smell, touch, taste, and see the differences

Bring in various types of plants; smell, touch, hear, and see the differences

THOUGHTS AND COMMUNICATION

Thought awareness activity

Leader reads a question to students and they write their response. Then go around circle and share responses after each question. Examples of questions are (1) Sometimes I like to think and sometimes I don't like to think. What do I think about most often? (2) In school we learn to think. My favorite subject to think about is what? Why? (3) I am allowed to have my own thoughts. Sometimes what I think is different from what my friends and family think. What is an example of this?

Communication and listening exercise

(1) Take about 1-2 minutes to tell a partner what you liked about Mindfulness Class, did not like about it, what you would have liked to have done, etc. Partner listens very carefully while the first person talks. (2) Partner repeats back to first person what she/he said (2 minutes). (3) Switch roles.

Guided imagery

Students are guided into an experience and are asked to focus and pay attention to their experience, breathing, body, senses, thoughts, etc.

Sample Lesson Plan: Session 4¹

Purpose: Using Movement Mindfully

Focus: Paying attention to how our bodies feel and how we feel emotionally

1. Mindfulness

Ask students what they have been aware of today

2. Smile Exercise

3. Paying Attention to Your Breathing

Lie on floor on your back in a circle with feet toward center of circle. Put hands on belly. Breathe for one minute.

4. Body Scan (see above description)

5. Physical Exercises (repeated from previous classes) (see description in Appendix B)

6. Listening and Movement Exercise with Music (see description in Appendix B)

7. Smiling Circle Exercise

Sit in a big circle. Breathe in and out. With each breath, smile a little bit. Smile a little more with each breath until your smile gets as big as possible. Make eye contact and smile at each person in the circle.

¹All of the above activities can be modified according to the facilitator's interest, experience, and creativity. The key focus of all activities is *paying attention to the experience without judging what's happening*.

Yoga Stretches/Positions

Standing Postures

Palm Tree – Stand with your feet together, arms at your sides. Lift your right arm above your head. Rise up on your toes while stretching your left arm down. Repeat with left arm up.

Seed to Tree – Come into a squat position. Curl into a tight ball, like a seed. Take a deep breath, begin making tiny movements as you unfold from the seed into a full grown tree.

Standing or Sitting Positions

Shoulder Circles – Slowly roll the right shoulder clockwise, squeezing it toward the ear, then down, forward, and up. Repeat several times. Reverse direction of circle and then repeat on opposite side. Finally, rotate both shoulders at the same time, then repeat in opposite direction.

Neck Stretches – Press head away from shoulders, gently tilting head backward so chin aims at ceiling. Then bring chin forward, pressing against the chest. Feel the back of the neck open and stretch. Bring head to center, tilting it to the left, lowering the ear to the left shoulder. Turn head slightly to the side and slowly roll it back to center and then repeat on the right side. Feel the neck extend as you lean to each side.

Sitting Positions

Toe Hug – Sit down, bring your legs together and stretch them straight out in front of you. Stretch your toes toward your head with both hands.

Cat – Stand on “all fours” like a cat and lower your head, stretching your back up. Breathe slowly through your mouth and on the exhale, raise your head and curve the back the opposite way. Look up and repeat several times.

Lying Down Positions

Bike Ride – Lie down on your back with your legs lifted off the floor. Rotate your legs in a circular motion as if you are riding a bicycle. Now add your hands – have fun and add a bit of laughter, too. 😊

Knee Press – While on your back, bend your right knee toward your chest and wrap your arms around it as you bring it to your forehead. Press for 3 seconds and repeat with alternate leg. Try pressing both knees now!

Bow - Lie on your stomach. Bend your legs and lift your feet off the floor. Reach behind and grab your feet or ankles with your hands. Pull your legs in close to you. Look up. Then pull on your feet and try to lift your knees off the floor and stretch your body like a bow. Slowly come down toward the floor, unfolding your legs.

Hara Breaths

The Hara – To fully experience the posture, start each Hara exercise slowly, deepen breath, let out any natural sounds, stay relaxed and loose, slowly picking up the pace. On the exhale, let the sound of **HA** become increasingly strong. The **HA** sound is a forceful exhaling release. Allow yourself to let the sound go free if it happens. Hara postures are energizing and invigorating!

Brushing Floor – Stand with feet comfortably apart, swinging arms forward and back. Keep knees slightly bent, press feet into ground, exhale HA as you bend forward brushing floor with fingertips. Inhale, return to standing as you swing arms up over head and repeat. Lightly bounce the knees and ankles as your arms swing down and again as the arms swing up.

Movement Activities (Qi-gong)

Listening and Movement with Music – Play a song for approximately 30 seconds. Just listen to the music. How do you feel now? Play the same song again, and this time move to the music however your body wants to move. How do you feel now? Repeat using different types of music. Notice how you feel differently when different types of music are playing.

Partner Exercises – (1) Stand facing partner. One person bends her/his arms at the elbows and puts her/his hands palms facing up out in front. The other person raises her/his hands to shoulder height with palms facing out and then, moving entire upper body, swings arms downward and slaps the palms of the partner's hands and then continues the movement, following through after slapping hands, including bending the knees. Each person stays in the same position for about 30 seconds, repeating several times. Then switch positions and repeat for about 30 seconds. (2) Stand back to back. Each raises hands to shoulder height, palms facing out. Both drop arms and clap with partner. Do not look at partner. Continue trying to tune into partner and to time the hand clapping together. (3) Stand back to back. Each raises hands to shoulder height with palms facing out. Both turn to your right, keeping your feet planted. Twist around to the right until you clap hands. Then repeat, both turning to the left until you clap hands.

Corkscrew Exercise – Put right foot in front with knee bent slightly. Place left hand behind your back. Bend right elbow and put right hand palm up in front of you. Now slowly turn your right hand in toward your body. Continue turning your hand in this direction and gradually raise your arm up over your head at the same time, leaning back slightly. Pretend you have a plate on your head and do not want to drop it. Repeat exercise with the left hand.

Foot Massage – With feet planted on the floor, slowly sway from side to side, keeping your balance. Now slowly sway from front to back, still keeping feet planted and keeping your balance. Now gently massage feet by slowly moving body around in a circle while still keeping feet planted. Then move in a circle in the other direction.

Walking Exercise – (1) Everybody take 4 steps slowly in a direction of your choice, then change directions and take 4 steps in a different direction. Continue walking in this manner. Do not make eye contact with anyone, but be aware of your position and do not run into others. (2) Now clench jaw and make fists and continue walking in this manner as in step 1. (3) Relax face and arms. Now walk slowly, taking 3 steps in a direction before changing directions. (4) Same as 3, but a little faster. (5) Now take two steps and then switch directions. (6) Same as 5, but a little faster. (7) Now take 3 steps in a direction before changing and make eye contact with as many people as possible. (8) Very, very, very slowly, this time move backwards with eyes closed, taking 3 steps before changing directions. (9) Everyone spread out, leaving middle of room empty. Now again very, very, very slowly, everyone with eyes closed move toward the middle of the room and stop when you think you are there or when you are against someone else and can no longer move.

Windmill Partner Exercise – Stand back-to-back with a partner, holding hands. Together, lift arms up on one side and over to the other, then follow with other arms. Bend toward the floor, one arm followed by the other like a windmill.

Butterfly Exercise – Sit on floor. Place soles of feet together and bring them toward your body. Place soles of feet together and bring them toward your body. Flap bent legs ("butterfly wings"). Lean forward and see if you can put your elbows on the floor.

Shake Your Sillies Out – Have students focus on one body part at a time, beginning with their heads, and shake each part until they get to the feet. When they focus on the feet, have them shake each foot and then slowly stomp and rapidly pick up the pace, noticing the breath and how the body feels (i.e., temperature changing, heart beating faster, etc.).