



MINDFULNESS APPS TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR INNER CALM

Anxiety is a very normal response to what is a very abnormal situation we all find ourselves in – surviving a global pandemic. Unless you write science fiction, or study disease outbreaks, preparing for and responding to a pandemic was probably not something you'd previously given a lot of thought to. So how do we keep from falling into a pit of despair and full-blown panic?

A powerful quote by world-renowned Zen Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, who was instrumental in introducing the practice of mindfulness to the West is, *“When the crowded Vietnamese refugee boats met with storms or pirates, if everyone panicked all would be lost. But if even one person on the boat remained calm and cantered, it was enough. It showed the way for everyone to survive.”*

One way of finding a place of inner calm and centredness is mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention, purposefully and non-judgementally, to the present moment. It may involve a formal practice of sitting quietly and focusing on the breath, but it can equally refer to the practice of being mindful whilst in the midst of daily life. For instance, taking a walk, eating breakfast, or even brushing your teeth can become part of our mindfulness practice when we deliberately tune into our experience of the activity.

Research has shown that mindfulness can help reduce stress, chronic pain (such as headaches), blood pressure, and better navigate a variety of mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. It has also been shown to improve focus and feeling of calm and well-being. So now might be a great time to give mindfulness a go – even if you think meditation is not your thing, there are plenty of apps and web-site out there to help you learn and develop your own mindfulness practice. Here are just a few:

- * [Calm.com](https://www.calm.com)
- * [Headspace](https://www.headspace.com)
- * [Insight Timer](https://insighttimer.com)
- * [Tara Brach](#) – Facing Pandemic Fears with an Awake Heart
- * [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com)