

Mindfully Walk

The University Mile



Following the St John's Campus University Mile using the small green direction markers is a good route to try this Mindfulness activity. Depending on your walking speed, it takes about 30 minutes.

As you are walking try slowing down your pace and notice the sensations of walking.

As you follow the mile, spend a few moments exploring the natural and human-made things you encounter.

Notice their different textures, and your responses to them. What sounds are you aware of? What are the qualities of the sound?

Perhaps take a moment to explore the courtyard between the Sports Centre and Charles Darwin and try walking on the different surfaces. What do you notice with each surface.

See over the page for more mindfulness ideas for your walk ...



Mindfulness as you Walk

As you move around the area suspend your auto-pilot and be mindful of:

1. **Walking**—Slow down your walking and bring the focus to the soles of your feet, getting a direct sense of the physical sensations of the contact of the feet with the ground and the weight of your body transmitted through your legs and feet to the ground. Notice how as you walk you transfer the weight of your body into the right leg, noticing the changing pattern of physical sensations in the legs and feet as the left leg lifts and the right leg takes over the support of the body. Repeat with the left leg, aware of the shifting pattern of physical sensations in the two legs and feet as you walk.
2. **Sound**—Allow your awareness to focus on hearing. There is no need to go searching for sounds, instead, simply be receptive to sounds from all directions as they arise—sounds that are close, sounds that are far, sounds that are in front, behind, to the side. Allow the awareness to include obvious sounds and more subtle sounds. Allow it to include the space between sounds and silence itself. As best as you can, be aware of sounds simply as sounds, notice their sensory qualities (patterns of pitch, timbre, loudness, and duration) rather than their meanings or implications.
3. **Sight**—Pause for a moment. Look around and notice what your attention is drawn to look at. Settle to look at one thing/part of a thing. Notice its colour, its texture, any interplay of light and shade. Observe it like you've never looked at it before. Notice the shape of it and its connection to the things or parts that you see around it.
4. **Touch**—Choose something to touch. Observe its qualities: rough or smooth, warm or cold, dry or wet, hard or soft. If it's something you can hold, is it heavy or light.
5. **Breathe**—Bring your attention to your breathe as you walk. Where do you notice your breathe most? - in the rise and fall of your chest, your abdomen, your shoulders, or as the air enters or leaves your nostrils or mouth? Notice the sensation as your lungs empty and refill.
6. **Thoughts**—Allow the focus of your awareness shift to your thoughts. Notice their arising, lingering, and passing as they eventually dissolve and disappear. There is no need to try and make thoughts come and go—just let them come and go on their own. You might find it helpful to see thoughts as clouds moving across the sky. Sometimes they are dark and stormy, sometimes they are light and fluffy. Sometimes they fill the entire sky. Sometimes they clear out completely, leaving the sky cloudless. If any thoughts bring with them intense feelings or emotions, pleasant or unpleasant, as best as you can note their "emotional charge" and intensity and let them be as they already are.