

## MAKING MINDFULNESS WORK *for you*

When your therapist suggests mindfulness meditation or journaling as coping skills, it's okay to roll your eyes! Coping skills aren't a one-size-fits-all solution and can sometimes feel more like a chore than a healthy habit. However, the goal of most coping skills is to make them part of your daily routine, providing a safety net when stress builds up. Coping skills can be any activity that makes you feel even a little better and is healthy for your brain and body.

Journaling doesn't have to mean just putting pen to paper. It can involve any activity or exercise that helps release stressful thoughts from your mind. Consider what types of settings help you organize your thoughts and clear your head. Then, think about activities you feel comfortable doing in those settings. This could be your version of "journaling."

Mindfulness meditation is traditionally a guided exercise that teaches you how to respond to your thoughts in healthy ways. Some people enjoy the calming imagery of a leaf floating down a stream to soothing music, while others find it hard to stay focused long enough to feel the benefits. At its core, mindfulness meditation is about being present in the moment. This can include hobbies, activities, or support systems that help you connect with the present instead of getting caught up in worries about the past or future.

Examples of alternative journaling or mindfulness meditation activities include:

### ARTS AND CRAFTS:

Engage in focused activities like crocheting or knitting, which require concentration and repetition.

### YOGA:

Whether you follow a guided class/video or practice on your own, yoga is an excellent way to connect with your breath and body.

### BEING IN NATURE:

Spending time outside and focusing on your senses can ground you in the present moment. Sit quietly, close your eyes, and listen to birds or rustling leaves, feel the air on your skin, and notice the scents around you.

### LETTER WRITING:

Write a letter to someone (or yourself) as a way to process emotions, reflect on experiences, or express thoughts that may be difficult to say out loud. You can choose to send it, keep it as a personal reflection, or destroy it as a symbolic release.

### HORTICULTURE:

Activities like gardening, watering, or simply spending time with plants can help boost your mood.

### JUNK JOURNALING:

Using old magazines, postcards, fabric scraps, and other discarded materials, create a unique and personalized journal for writing, drawing, collaging, and recording memories or thoughts. This creative practice repurposes "junk" into an expressive outlet with no strict rules on what can be included.



Remember, the goal of journaling and mindfulness activities is to engage your mind, not to distract it. Try to steer clear of screen-based activities or anything that causes you to 'zone out.' By exploring different approaches, you may discover a coping skill that feels natural and effective, one that supports your well-being without feeling like a chore.



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