

BEAVERTON



Safe Routes to School



Mindful Walking: A Resource Guide for Educators and Parents



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Research shows that daily mindful practice can, improve mood, attention, and personal relationships. Mindful awareness practice can shrink the parts of our brain that create the flight/fight/fear response and increase the grey matter in parts of our brain that help us regulate emotions and social connection. Mindful walking is a great way to de-stress while doing something that we all do, every day, walk! Mindful walking allows us to feel calm and in control even when practiced for just a few moments.



What is Mindfulness and Self-Awareness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present and aware of where we are and what we are doing. Practicing mindfulness allows us to regulate our reactions and promotes our ability to stay calm and focused. Mindfulness is our awareness of what is going on both inside us and around us – awareness of our physical, emotional, and mental states. At the core of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) for kids and adults is self-awareness. One way to practice self-awareness is through mindful walking.

How can I get started?

Mindful walking can be done anytime, anywhere. Teachers can start by first, teaching children to walk in a circle in the classroom or down the hallway. Families can walk mindfully to the mailbox or the school bus in the morning. Try a mindful walk with your dog and use this opportunity to restore a sense of focus. Mindful walking is a great opportunity to get outside and breathe.

Mindful Walking – The Basics

1. As you walk, become aware of your breathing. Continue to breathe in and out steadily.
2. Be aware of how your feet touch the ground. Notice what part of your foot touches the ground first and how it feels as it touches and leaves the ground.
3. Become aware of your legs and hips as you move. Do you feel any tension?
4. Become aware of your arms swinging as you walk.
5. Notice how the air feels against your skin.
6. Be aware of the colors and shapes around you.
7. Become aware of the smells around you as you walk.
8. Continue to be aware of your breathing and every sensation in your body as you walk.

Mindful Walking Activities to Try

The following mindful walking activities can be done solo, with kids, or as a family:

Rainbow Walk

Start by walking slowly, breathing in deeply through your nose and out through your mouth. Bring your awareness to things you can see around you. Then, slowly bring your awareness to naming things you can see, hear, smell, or feel, for each of the colors of the rainbow. For example:

Red: Firetruck

Orange: Construction sign

Yellow: Caution tape

Green: Grass

Blue: Sky

Indigo: Car

Violet: Flowers



Repeat as desired for the duration of your walk. When you are finished, stop, and stand still, taking a few moments to breathe slowly as you stand at rest.

Take 5 Grounding Walk

Start by walking slowly, breathing in deeply through your nose and out through your mouth. Then, slowly bring your awareness to naming:

Five things you see.

Four things you could touch.

Three things you hear.

Two things you smell.

One emotion you feel.

Repeat as desired for the duration of your walk. When you are finished, stop, and stand still, taking a few moments to breathe slowly as you stand at rest.

For Wiggly or Younger Kids

If Mindful walking is a struggle, you can invite children to walk in more playful ways. Ask, “What does it feel like to walk on your heels? On your toes? On the outside edges of your feet?” By changing the experience, we increase engagement and ease of focus: as your child learns this activity slowly reduce the amount of time spent walking playfully and reintroduce the simple mindful walk.

Other Resources

[Beaverton Safe Routes to School Mindful Walking SEL Lesson](#) - A remote learning SEL lesson created with google slides for Beaverton School District.

[The Mindful Practice Podcast: Walking Meditation](#) - A podcast with mindful walking instructions.

[No Time for Mindfulness? Try This On-the-Go Walking Meditation](#) - Elisha Goldstein offers a simple walking meditation in four steps.

[Mindful Walking with Cosmic Kids](#) – A YouTube video that teaches how to pay attention to our surroundings as we walk on an autumn day.



If you enjoy these resources, please check out the [Beaverton Safe Routes to School webpage](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#)!