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## CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP PEACEFUL WELL-BEING

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### ABSTRACT

Looking for ways to cultivate greater peace and well-being in your life? Consider the ancient Buddhist practice of mindfulness. We present mindfulness as the art of cultivating “awareness of the present.” Our article offers practical tips for incorporating mindfulness into your daily routine, with an emphasis on promoting peaceful, positive states of mind. While we discuss the concept of peaceful well-being from a Buddhist perspective, we recognize that mindfulness is a practice that can benefit anyone, regardless of background or belief system. We provide a useful analysis for understanding and easy measurement of peaceful well-being. Research has demonstrated that mindfulness can enhance physical, mental, and cognitive well-being. By integrating mindfulness into activities such as walking, sitting, or eating, you can enjoy the many benefits of this transformative practice. Based on evidence-driven research projects in cultivating mindfulness practices, this paper enables practitioners to create peaceful well-being.

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## INTRODUCTION

The research on mindfulness has increased rapidly in the modern era.<sup>1</sup> Several researchers have demonstrated a significant positive relationship that exists between mindfulness practices and well-being.<sup>2</sup> According to the American Psychological Association (2019), mindfulness makes a huge contribution to positive physical and psychological health.<sup>3</sup> Numerous empirical researchers have discovered that the practice of mindfulness improves the mental health of people who suffer burnout, anxiety, depression or stress, and promotes their positive well-being.<sup>4</sup> This article will delve further into mindfulness activities that can serve as tools for enhancing peaceful well-being. These activities encompass a range of practices designed to encourage focused attention and awareness of the present moment.

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a core Buddhist teaching that emphasises the value of “present-moment” awareness. Mindfulness lies “at the core of Buddhist meditative practices, yet its essence is universal.”<sup>5</sup> It is a key concept in the Tipiṭaka (Three Baskets), the foundational scriptures of Theravāda Buddhism. It is not *just* a practice; it is Buddha’s guidance for understanding oneself and one’s life. Venerable Dr Henepola Gunaratana, the author of one of the best sellers on mindfulness, has provided us with several useful interpretations of mindfulness in his *Mindfulness in Plain English*.<sup>6</sup> Grounding our research on scriptural authorities, we recognise the importance of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*—Discourse on the (Four) Foundations of Mindfulness—which illustrates mindfulness practice. The framework for mindfulness prescribed there focuses on four anchors: (a) body, (b) feelings, (c) mind, and (d) mental objects (MI 55).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Erik Dane and Bradley J. Brummel, “Examining Workplace Mindfulness and Its Relations to Job Performance and Turnover Intention,” *Human Relations* 67 (2013): 105–28; Kirk Warren Brown, Richard M. Ryan, and J. David Creswell, “Mindfulness: Theoretical Foundations and Evidence for Its Salutary Effects,” *Psychological Inquiry* 18 (2007): 211–37.

<sup>2</sup> Hanna Suh, “Motivational Orientations to Mindfulness and Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 9 (2019): 1–19; Laura Ilona Urrila, “From Personal Wellbeing to Relationships: A Systematic Review on the Impact of Mindfulness Interventions and Practices on Leaders,” *Human Resource Management Review* 32 (2022): 100837; Tammy D. Allen et al., “Mindfulness and Meditation Practice as Moderators of the Relationship between Age and Subjective Wellbeing among Working Adults,” *Mindfulness* 8 (2017): 1055–63; Michael D. Robinson and Michael Eid, *The Happy Mind: Cognitive Contributions to Well-Being* (Springer eBooks, 2017), Accessed 2 September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58763-9>.

<sup>3</sup> American Psychological Association, “Mindfulness meditation: A research-proven way to reduce stress,” Published October 2019, Accessed 2 September 2023, <https://www.apa.org/topics/mindfulness/meditation>.

<sup>4</sup> Tim Lomas, et al., “The Impact of Mindfulness on the Wellbeing and Performance of Educators: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 61 (2017): 132–41.

<sup>5</sup> Padmasiri de Silva, *Mindfulness-based Emotion Focused Counselling* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 218.

<sup>6</sup> Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011). Before Wisdom publications picked up Venerable Gunaratana’s influential book, it was first published in 1991 in Taiwan by the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation for free distribution. For our discussion of mindfulness at hand, chapter 13 provides us several useful interpretations of mindfulness such as it being “pre-symbolic,” “mirror-thought,” “non-judgmental observation,” “impartial watchfulness,” “nonconceptual awareness,” “present-time awareness,” “non-egoistic alertness,” “goalless awareness,” “awareness of change,” and “participatory observation,” etc. See Venerable H. Gunaratana Mahathera, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1991), 142–147.

<sup>7</sup> An excellent English translation with a brief introduction to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* can be found in Rupert Gethin, *Sayings of the Buddha: A Selection of Suttas from the Pali Nikayas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141–151.

Researchers have explained mindfulness in a variety of ways.<sup>8</sup> For example, Ritchie & Bryant observe that mindfulness has been broadly defined, ranging from the theory and implementation of Buddhism to clinical therapies, educational study and mediation, and positive psychology.<sup>9</sup> Rupert Gethin has identified T.W. Rhys Davids (1843–1922), founder of the Pali Text Society, as the first person to translate the Pāli term “*sati*” as “mindfulness” in 1881.<sup>10</sup> In their study, Singh & Joy later found that Rhys David’s decision to translate *sati* into English as “mindfulness” was one of the reasons that it became so popular and a common and trendy word today.<sup>11</sup> *Sati* means “memory”<sup>12</sup> and refers to a combination of the words, “mindful and thoughtful” (*sato sampajāno*); it means the ability to maintain the activity of the mind in the present moment, which is one of the practices commonly cultivated by Buddhist practitioners. This can be clarified further by stating that the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* repeatedly emphasizes the need for both mindfulness (*sati*) and clear comprehension (*sampajañña*). The Buddha instructs both monastics and lay people to contemplate the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects “mindfully and thoughtfully” (M I 55). In the *Bojjhaṅga Sutta* (Discourse on the (Seven) Factors of Awakening) mindfulness (*sati*) is listed as the first factor paving the way for the development of other mental qualities like investigation (*dhamma vicaya*) and discernment (*yoniso manasikāra*). These qualities were fueled by “*sato sampajāno*,” ultimately leading to the awakening mind (M I 227).

The term “mindfulness” is described as “drawing on one’s complete awareness to be fully present and engaged in the moment.”<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Bround & Ryan describe a state of consciousness as having complete awareness of a momentary experience, as well as being mindful of what is going on inside and outside, including thoughts, emotions, sensations, actions or surroundings. For the sake of clarity, this article defines mindfulness as a state of being aware of the present circumstances, and the pursuit of mindfulness involves thoughts, emotions, sensations, and actions.

## WHAT IS PEACEFUL WELL-BEING?

We can use the Buddhist teaching of the Four Noble Truths to define and explain “peaceful well-being” (SN 56.11). The essence of the Four Noble Truths is its explanation of suffering (*dukkha*) concerning its origin, cessation, and the path that leads to its ending.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Grégoire, Thérèse Bouffard, and Carole Vezeau, “Personal Goal Setting as a Mediator of the Relationship between Mindfulness and Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2 (2012): 236–50.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy D. Ritchie and Fred B. Bryant, “Positive State Mindfulness: A Multidimensional Model of Mindfulness in Relation to Positive Experience,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2 (2012): 150–81.

<sup>10</sup> Rupert Gethin, “On Some Definitions of Mindfulness,” *Contemporary Buddhism* 12 (1) 2011: 263–279.

<sup>11</sup> Nirbhay N. Singh and Subhashni D. Singh Joy, *Mindfulness-Based Interventions with Children and Adolescents: Research and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> For example, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, first published in 1921–1925, defines *sati* (Vedic *smṛti*) as “memory, recognition, consciousness, intentness of mind, wakefulness of mind, mindfulness, alertness, lucidity of mind, self-possession, conscience, self-consciousness.” T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede (eds.), *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1986), 672.

<sup>13</sup> G. Alan Marlatt and Jean L. Kristeller, “Mindfulness and Meditation,” *Integrating Spirituality into Treatment: Resources for Practitioners*, 1999, 67–84.

The first of these truths—suffering (*dukkha*)—acknowledges that human life is inherently marked by various forms of suffering, pain, dissatisfaction, disjointedness, distress and unsatisfactoriness. The second—the origin of suffering (*samudaya*)—identifies the root cause of suffering as “*taṇhā*,” which means “thirst”, craving, desire, or attachment. This craving arises from ignorance and leads to clinging to impermanent things, resulting in further suffering. The third truth—the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*)—presents the possibility to end the cycle of suffering. By eliminating the causes of suffering, particularly craving and ignorance, one can attain a state known as Nirvāṇa—a state of complete liberation, peace, and freedom from all forms of suffering and illness. Lastly, the Path to the cessation of suffering (*magga*) is outlined in the Eightfold Path, the practical framework of action prescribed to overcome suffering and thereby attain Nirvāṇa. This path encompasses the right understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

In summary, peaceful well-being is thus directly linked to and essential to the reduction of suffering. As suffering diminishes, peaceful well-being increases, leading to an understanding that peaceful well-being is essentially the state of being free from suffering.

The *Online Dictionary of the Cambridge University Press*<sup>14</sup> provides a useful definition of well-being by stating that it is “a state of feeling healthy and happy.”<sup>15</sup> The definition of well-being given by the World Health Organisation (WHO) is, however, much broader: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Several researchers use two prominent philosophical/ethical approaches—hedonic and eudaimonic—to explain further the aspects of well-being.<sup>16</sup> Both hedonic (or subjective in seeking pleasure) and eudaimonic (or psychologically seeking happiness) well-being emerged in ancient Greek philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Subjective well-being refers to how individuals personally experience and evaluate their happiness. It is typically associated with the pursuit of one’s maximum pleasure and indulgence in achieving happiness. On the other hand, the psychological well-being (PWB) tradition focuses more on the sense of well-being that arises from human development as well as the process of overcoming challenges.

Rather than providing a specific definition, previous studies defined well-being by highlighting its dimensions. Recognizing the challenges involved in defining well-being, Dodge, *et al.* have proposed

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<sup>14</sup> Cambridge University Press, *Online Dictionary*, 2019: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/well-being>

<sup>15</sup> Gemma Simons and David S. Baldwin, “A Critical Review of the Definition of ‘Wellbeing’ for Doctors and Their Patients in a Post Covid-19 ERA,” *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 67 (2021): 984–91.

<sup>16</sup> Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, “Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and Well-Being: An Introduction,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9 (2006): 1–11; Annamaria Di Fabio and Letizia Palazzeschi, “Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being: The Role of Resilience Beyond Fluid Intelligence and Personality Traits,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015); Luke Henderson and Tess Knight, “Integrating the Hedonic and Eudaimonic Perspectives to More Comprehensively Understand Wellbeing and Pathways to Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2 (2012): 196–221.

<sup>17</sup> Corey L. Keyes, Dov Shmotkin, and Carol D. Ryff, “Optimizing Well-Being: The Empirical Encounter of Two Traditions,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82 (2002): 1007–22.

a new definition of happiness,<sup>18</sup> which strikes the right balance between the difficulties individuals face and their pool of resources. By elaborating further we can maintain that sustainable welfare occurs when a person has access to the right amount of psychological, social, and physical resources to overcome a particular challenge in life. The definition of well-being based on the right balance between resources and challenges mentioned in the study of Dodge, *et al.* is illustrated in Figure 1 below.<sup>19</sup>

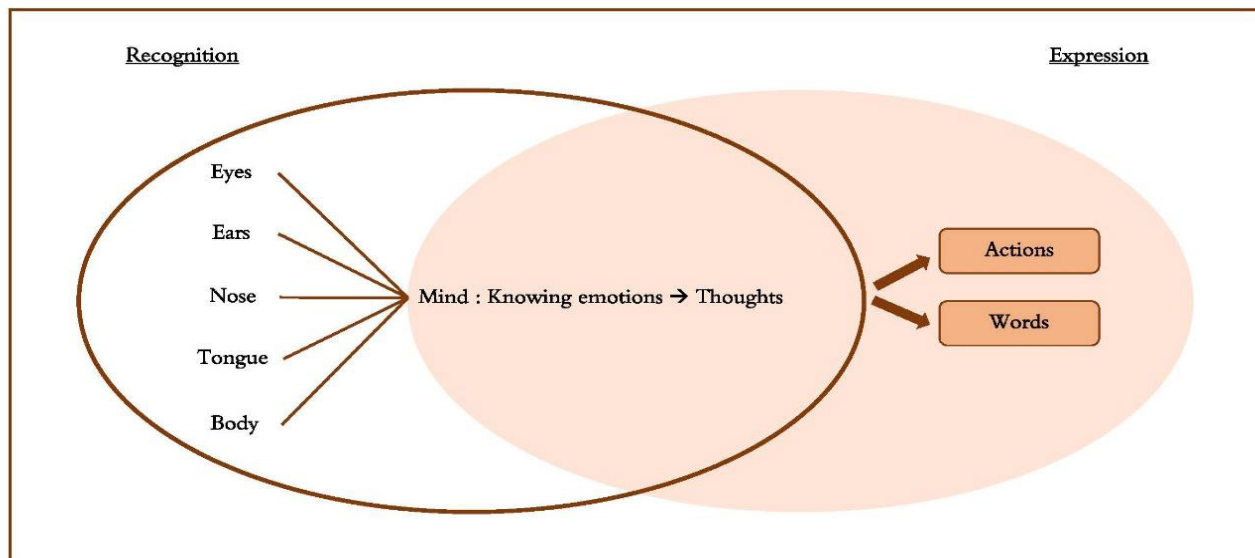


Figure 1: Definition of well-being



Figure 2: Relationship between recognition and expression

The distinguished Siamese Buddhist scholarly monk, Venerable Prayudh Aryankura Payutto (b. 1938) proposes that well-being can be classified based on physical, social or moral, psychological and intellectual dimensions and that the balance of the relationship between “recognition” and “expression” promotes peaceful well-being.<sup>20</sup> “Recognition” refers to human beings’ ability to use their senses to identify external factors; for example, the eyes identify objects by seeing them, the ears identify sounds by hearing/ listening to them, the nose identifies different odours by smelling them, the tongue identifies food by

<sup>18</sup> Rachel Dodge, *et al.*, “The Challenge of Defining Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2 (2012): 222–35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> P.A. Payutto (Somdet Phra Buddhakosajarn), *Integrated Welfare in Buddhism* (Bangkok: Pimsuay Printing, 2019).



tasting it, the body identifies tangible objects by touching them and lastly, the mind identifies emotions, either from the five senses or by itself. Individuals can improve their well-being by practising recognition based on the use of these senses. Then, “expression” is the behaviour that results from thoughts, speech, and actions. Hence, the promotion of “well-being” depends on the ability to manage the relationship between recognition and expression, as shown in Figure 2.

## HOLISTIC DEFINITION OF PEACEFUL WELL-BEING

Venerable Payutto included intellectual well-being in addition to the other dimensions mentioned in the study of Dodge, *et al.*<sup>21</sup> In this paper, the term “peaceful” is combined with “well-being” to further refine and deepen our understanding of this concept. This combination suggests that well-being not only leads to peace but also, aligning with Buddhist beliefs, a peaceful state of mind fosters well-being, illustrating a mutual relationship between the two. The four distinctive domains of peaceful well-being are (a) physical, (b) behavioural, (c) psychological and (d) intellectual. The framework of these four domains can be explained as follows.

1. Physical well-being: this is solely focused on physical health.
2. Behavioural well-being: its characteristics include talking and acting politely to others, as well as maintaining harmony with everyone.
3. Psychological well-being: this is defined as a good state of mind and good thoughts. A good state of mind includes delightfulness, cheerfulness, absence of stress, and freedom from depression.
4. Intellectual well-being: from an intellectual perspective, peaceful well-being means that individuals have the wisdom to deal with difficulties or challenges, can make effective decisions at proper times, and understand well and beneficially manage their lives.

In summary, peaceful well-being is a comprehensive concept encompassing several key aspects. At its core, it aligns with the basic definition of well-being as being healthy and happy, as per the *Online Cambridge Dictionary*. Additionally, the World Health Organization broadens this concept to include complete physical, mental, and social wellness. Using the terms “peaceful” and “wellbeing” together provides a more comprehensive explanation of wellbeing. This article focuses on the holistic concept of peaceful well-being, encompassing four dimensions: (a) Physical, (b) Psychological, (c) Behavioral, and (d) Intellectual well-being.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEACEFUL WELL-BEING THROUGH MINDFULNESS

This paper describes the concept of peaceful well-being as being associated with mindfulness. Many researchers have confirmed that mindfulness can lead to peaceful well-being.<sup>22</sup> Mindfulness-based

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Dodge, *et al.*, “The Challenge of Defining Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2 (2012): 222–35.

<sup>22</sup> Shian-Ling Keng, Moria J. Smoski, and Clive J. Robins, “Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A Review of Empirical Studies,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 31 (2011): 1041–56; Shauna L. Shapiro and Linda E. Carlson,

interventions are now being studied scientifically and found to be an important element in improving well-being. There is more evidence of the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in reducing harmful health situations,<sup>23</sup> catalysing chronic condition self-management and changing health behaviour,<sup>24</sup> and developing both physical and mental health.<sup>25</sup>

The benefits of mindfulness activities in various studies can be summarised to align with the four (a) physical, (b) behavioural, (c) psychological, and (d) intellectual domains of peaceful well-being, as detailed below.

#### (a) The physical effect of peaceful well-being

The prevalence of mindfulness activities can improve physical health in numerous ways.<sup>26</sup> Mindfulness can reduce the symptoms of coronary heart disease,<sup>27</sup> lower blood pressure,<sup>28</sup> reduce chronic pain,<sup>29</sup> improve sleep,<sup>30</sup> and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.<sup>31</sup>

A 9-week customised mindfulness programme was presented at Brown University to specifically lower the high blood pressure of 43 hypertensive participants, who were followed up a year later to check their condition.<sup>32</sup> It was found that mindfulness improved blood pressure based on the development of good focus, emotional control, and self-awareness of both healthy and unhealthy behaviour.

The outpatients department of a medical centre in northern Taiwan evaluated the effects of mindful walking on patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) based on an eight-week exercise

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“Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Physical Health,” in *The Art and Science of Mindfulness: Integrating Mindfulness into Psychology and the Helping Professions* (2009), 75–91, Accessed 2 September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1037/11885-006>; Itai Ivztan, Ryan M. Niemiec, and Charlie Briscoe, “A Study Investigating the Effects of Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP) on Wellbeing,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 6 (2016): 1–13; Karen Whelan-Berry and Ryan Niemiec, “Integrating Mindfulness and Character Strengths for Improved Well-Being, Stress, and Relationships: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice,” *International Journal of Wellbeing* 11 (2021): 38–50.

<sup>23</sup> Elena Salmoirago-Blotcher, *et al.*, “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Change in Health-Related Behaviors,” *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine* 18 (2013): 243–47.

<sup>24</sup> Richa Gawande, *et al.*, “Mindfulness Training Enhances Self-Regulation and Facilitates Health Behavior Change for Primary Care Patients: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 34 (2018): 293–302.

<sup>25</sup> Simon B. Goldberg, *et al.*, “Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Psychiatric Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 59 (2018): 52–60.

<sup>26</sup> Mark E. Hardison and Shawn C. Roll, “Mindfulness Interventions in Physical Rehabilitation: A Scoping Review,” *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 70 (2016).

<sup>27</sup> ManishJ Parswani, Mahendra P Sharma, and SS Iyengar, “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program in Coronary Heart Disease: A Randomized Control Trial,” *International Journal of Yoga* 6 (2013): 111.

<sup>28</sup> William R. Nardi, *et al.*, “Mindfulness and Cardiovascular Health: Qualitative Findings on Mechanisms from the Mindfulness-Based Blood Pressure Reduction (MB-BP) Study,” *PLoS One* 15 (2020).

<sup>29</sup> Halina Machelska, “Faculty Opinions Recommendation of Mindfulness Meditation for Chronic Pain: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Faculty Opinions—Post-Publication Peer Review of the Biomedical Literature*, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> David S. Black, *et al.*, “Mindfulness Meditation and Improvement in Sleep Quality and Daytime Impairment among Older Adults with Sleep Disturbances,” *JAMA Internal Medicine* 175 (2015): 494.

<sup>31</sup> Alissa P. Beath, *et al.*, “The Positive Effect of Mindfulness Rivals the Negative Effect of Neuroticism on Gastrointestinal Symptoms,” *Mindfulness* 10 (2018): 712–23.

<sup>32</sup> “Mindfulness Training May Help Lower Blood Pressure, New Study Shows,” Brown University, Accessed December 4, 2019, <https://www.brown.edu/news/2019-12-04/mb-bp>.

of mindful walking.<sup>33</sup> It was found that their capacity to walk and breathe improved after this exercise and the effects lasted for at least 4 weeks. This exercise demonstrated the ability of mindful walking to improve the symptoms and reduce the risk of COPD.

The JAMA Internal Medicine journal published a study in which there were 49 participants aged around 66 years old, who were suffering from a lack of sufficient sleep.<sup>34</sup> The study involved two different educational programmes. Half of the participants were enrolled in a conventional sleep and health education programme, while the remaining half were required to practice mindfulness for two hours a week for six weeks. During this time, they learned various mindfulness and meditation practices, which they were asked to practice at home. The quality of sleep of all the participants was measured at the end of the programme and it was found that those in the mindful group had a much better quality of sleep than the others. The depression, insomnia symptoms and exhaustion of those in the mindfulness group had also decreased. The researcher suspected that mindfulness and meditation had improved that part of the brain that is related to stress and emotional stimulation. He explained that people who suffer from insomnia take all their negative thoughts to bed with them and immediately start to worry if they will be able to sleep. By practising mindfulness, they can observe those thoughts without engaging with them because it helps them be in the moment without thinking further about their problems.

## **(b) Behavioural effect of peaceful well-being**

The practice of mindfulness can often promote a more compassionate society.<sup>35</sup> Some may say that, since mindfulness is an internal experience that involves focusing on thoughts and emotions, it cannot be indicative of the way we treat others. Nevertheless, it is far from conclusive, science points to the possibility that mindfulness does lead to “actions, feelings and thoughts that benefit society in general” (to establish a kind and caring society), and more compassionate behaviour toward others.<sup>36</sup>

The *Journal of Experimental Psychology* published a recent study conducted to explore the inter-connection between mindfulness and prosocial behaviour. Based on an experimental design, it found that, very briefly, guided mindfulness also promoted a prosocial reaction to an ostracised stranger.<sup>37</sup>

Another study conducted by a Department of Psychology at an American University found that those who are more mindful are less concerned about their self-image but were more aware of compassion-orientated goals, such as giving constructive feedback to others or avoiding hurting or harming others.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Lin, Feng-Lien, and Mei-Ling Yeh, “Walking and Mindfulness Improve the Exercise Capacity of Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Randomised Controlled Trial,” *Clinical Rehabilitation* 35 (2021): 1117–25.

<sup>34</sup> David S. Black, *et al.*, “Mindfulness Meditation and Improvement in Sleep Quality and Daytime Impairment among Older Adults with Sleep Disturbances,” *JAMA Internal Medicine* 175 (2015): 494.

<sup>35</sup> Christina M. Luberto, *et al.*, “A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Meditation On Empathy, Compassion, and Prosocial Behaviors,” *Mindfulness* 9 (2017): 708–24.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel R. Berry, *et al.*, “Mindfulness Increases Prosocial Responses toward Ostracized Strangers through Empathic Concern,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 147 (2018): 93–112.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Kate L. Stewart, Anthony H. Ahrens, and Kathleen C. Gunthert, “Relating to Self and Other: Mindfulness Predicts



Moreover, practising mindfulness will promote healthy relationships within the family, workplace and community. Several authors have suggested that mindfulness may have great value in promoting healthy romantic relationships. For example, Welwood suggested that mindfulness promotes harmony, connection and intimacy in relationships,<sup>39</sup> while Carson, *et al.* observed that the more people practise mindfulness on a given day, the lower their overall stress due to better stress management and the happier they are in their relationships.<sup>40</sup>

### (c) The psychological effect of peaceful well-being

Global health is worsened by mental diseases. One-fifth of all adults are diagnosed with a mental disorder each year, and one-third of adults have such a disorder at some point during their lifetime.<sup>41</sup> However, there is mounting evidence that mindfulness interventions can help to reduce chronic psychopathological conditions.<sup>42</sup>

In an experiment, Clemson University's Department of Public Health Sciences used 38 physically inactive adults by dividing them into two groups.<sup>43</sup> One group participated in a one-hour mindful walking class every week for 4 weeks, and the other was given instructions to increase their physical activity. All the participants wore a wrist pedometer. According to the results of a Rapid Assessment of Physical Activity questionnaire, at the end of the experiment, all of them had their physical activity greatly improved and their depression substantially reduced. It is noteworthy here that the reduction of stress was much greater in the group that practised mindful walking than in the other group.

In an experiment based on the Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) programme, using a group of medical professionals, Lomas, *et al.* studied the correlation between mindfulness and well-being.<sup>44</sup> This programme emphasised "reperceiving" to change the participants' perspective of distress. It enabled medical professionals to understand that their thoughts and feelings are temporary as opposed to taking them constituting themselves. The research results demonstrated that after practising mindfulness the participants had cultivated more awareness necessary to cope with anxiety, depression and stress. Hence, it could be surmised that mindfulness practice has undoubtedly improved the well-being of these healthcare professionals. Furthermore, when a group of individuals reported high levels of mental distress, they were given eight mindful walking sessions over four weeks; the resulting effect was astonishing. Symptoms of

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Compassionate and Self-Image Relationship Goals," *Mindfulness* 9 (2017): 176–86.

<sup>39</sup> John Welwood, *Love and Awakening: Discovering the Sacred Path of Intimate Relationship* (New York: Harper-Perennial, 1997).

<sup>40</sup> James W. Carson, *et al.*, "Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement (MBRE) in Couples," *Mindfulness-Based Treatment Approaches*, 2006, 309–31.

<sup>41</sup> Zachary Steel, *et al.*, "The Global Prevalence of Common Mental Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis 1980–2013," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 43 (2014): 476–93.

<sup>42</sup> Ciro Conversano, *et al.*, "Mindfulness, Age and Gender as Protective Factors against Psychological Distress during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020).

<sup>43</sup> Lu Shi, *et al.*, "A Pilot Study of Mindful Walking Training on Physical Activity and Health Outcomes among Adults with Inadequate Activity," *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 44 (2019): 116–22.

<sup>44</sup> Tim Lomas, *et al.*, "A Systematic Review of the Impact of Mindfulness on the Well-being of Healthcare Professionals," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 74 (2017): 319–55.

physical stress significantly dropped; their quality of life dramatically improved.<sup>45</sup> These experiments demonstrate that mindfulness practice significantly reduces negative mental symptoms and promotes a better quality of life, leading to peaceful well-being.

#### **(d) Intellectual effect of peaceful well-being**

Practising mindfulness enables us to live in the present moment. Mindful practice improves our concentration.<sup>46</sup> In 2016, a group of researchers at Carnegie Mellon University conducted a study which illustrated how the practice of mindfulness improves our concentration and decision-making.<sup>47</sup> Their study focused on 35 unemployed adult participants who were looking for jobs. Without learning mindfulness meditation, the control group attended a three-day relaxation programme; the experimental group participated in a three-day mindfulness meditation programme. A comparison of the brain scans taken before and after the programme was revealing. The brain scans of meditators who practised meditation showed an increase in the brain network responsible for controlling attention.

Along with Andrew C. Hafenbrack and Zoe Kinias (INSEAD professors of organisational behaviour), Sigal Barsade (a management professor at Wharton) published a research paper in *Psychological Science* on how meditation affects decision-making. They referred to a previous study which had established that the participants who practised the 15-minute guided mindful breathing meditation were more likely to resist retrospective cost bias. (Retrospective cost bias refers to the likelihood of continuing to invest in something that cannot be recovered later.) Research demonstrated that those who practised mindfulness meditation were less worried about the past and their state of mind was much healthier than that of the other group, which enabled them to make better decisions because they possessed a clearer mind at the time of decision making.

Three researchers at Stanford University demonstrated that the practice of mindfulness meditation can specifically reduce social phobia.<sup>48</sup> In 2009, they published their research outputs on this theme in the *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*. Notably, 14 participants who suffered from social phobia had attended the meditation training programme for two months. Those participants reported a decrease in their anxiety levels after finishing the meditation programme. They also highlighted the improvement in their self-esteem.

<sup>45</sup> M. Teut, *et al.*, "Mindful Walking in Psychologically Distressed Individuals: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013 (2013): 1–7.

<sup>46</sup> Vladimir Bostanov, *et al.*, "Event-Related Brain Potentials Reflect Increased Concentration Ability after Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: A Randomized Clinical Trial," *Psychiatry Research* 199 (2012): 174–80.

<sup>47</sup> J. David Creswell, *et al.*, "Alterations in Resting-State Functional Connectivity Link Mindfulness Meditation with Reduced Interleukin-6: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Biological Psychiatry* 80 (2016): 53–61.

<sup>48</sup> Philippe Goldin, Wiveka Ramel, and James Gross, "Mindfulness Meditation Training and Self-Referential Processing in Social Anxiety Disorder: Behavioral and Neural Effects," *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy* 23 (2009): 242–57.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEACEFUL WELL-BEING THROUGH MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

The practice of mindfulness has recently become more popular. Nowadays, mindfulness training is widely accessible through various college courses, NHS counselling sessions, prison chaplaincy programmes, academic and professional workshops, online programmes, Apps and computer applications, and in-person meditation sessions.<sup>49</sup> Mindfulness practice promotes various aspects of well-being<sup>50</sup> such as physical<sup>51</sup> and mental health.<sup>52</sup> In their research, Carmody & Baer recommended the use of mindfulness activities to improve mindfulness, which finally leads to the development of well-being and reduction of stress.<sup>53</sup>

Few researchers have emphasized the relationship between mindfulness activities and well-being, or they have given a detailed description of mindfulness activities step-by-step. The focus of this study is mindfulness activities that promote four distinctive domains of peaceful well-being: (a) physical, (b) behavioural, (c) psychological and (d) intellectual. The mindful activities discussed in this paper concentrate on the four main daily-life activities of walking, sitting, sleeping and eating. Jiwattanasuk's study proves that mindful activities can truly create peaceful well-being concerning these four aspects.<sup>54</sup> The following sections contain step-by-step instructions for (a) mindful walking, (b) sitting, (c) sleeping, and (d) eating.

### (a) Mindful walking and (b) sitting

Walking and sitting are routine activities. We perform them on autopilot so we often fail to notice their performance. Walking is also today a practical means of doing physical exercise that promotes good health.<sup>55</sup> Mindfulness is described as the way to be in the present moment without being trapped in inept thoughts that arise from the experience.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Kelly Birtwell, *et al.*, "An Exploration of Formal and Informal Mindfulness Practice and Associations with Wellbeing," *Mindfulness* 10 (2018): 89–99.

<sup>50</sup> Shannon Hodges, "Mindfulness and Wellbeing," *The Professional Counselor*, 2020, 58–68; Stephen Paul McKenzie, "Real Wellbeing in Practice," *Reality Psychology*, 2022, 67–83.

<sup>51</sup> Elli Weisbaum and Nicholas Chadi, "Applied Mindfulness for Physician Wellbeing: A Prospective Qualitative Study Protocol," *Frontiers in Public Health* 10 (2022).

<sup>52</sup> Jenny Gu, *et al.*, "How Do Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Improve Mental Health and Wellbeing? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Mediation Studies," *Clinical Psychology Review* 37 (2015): 1–12.

<sup>53</sup> James Carmody and Ruth A. Baer, "Relationships between Mindfulness Practice and Levels of Mindfulness, Medical and Psychological Symptoms and Well-Being in a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program," *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 31 (2007): 23–33.

<sup>54</sup> Narumon Jiwattanasuk, "A Process of Development for Peaceful Well-Being of Meditation Practitioners through Buddhist Peaceful Means: A Case Study of Buddhahammetta Foundation, Chiang Rak Noi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya," (Ph.D. diss., Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2021).

<sup>55</sup> Nicholas D. Gilson, *et al.*, "Do Walking Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Reduce Reported Sitting in Workplaces: A Randomized Control Trial," *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 6 (2009): 43.

<sup>56</sup> M. Teut, *et al.*, "Mindful Walking in Psychologically Distressed Individuals: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013 (2013): 1–7.

Jiwattanasuk provides (a) Step-by-step Mindful Walking Instructions, as follows:<sup>57</sup>

1. Stand on the ground shoulder-width apart with both feet pointed straight ahead and parallel to each other. Acknowledge: “Standing, Standing, Standing.”
2. Before moving, note three times: “Intending to walk.”
3. Slightly lift the right foot and place it forward, note: “Right goes thus.”  
After placing the right foot, stop for a moment before moving to the left foot.
4. Slightly lift the left foot up and place it forward, note: “Left goes thus.”  
(Take one step at a time and be aware of the movement from beginning to end)
5. Keep walking until the end of the walking path; place the feet together on the last step, and note: “Stopping.”
6. Acknowledge: “Standing, Standing, Standing.”
7. Before taking the six steps, turn and note three times: “Intending to turn.”
8. Start turning by lifting the right toe and rotating the heel by 60 degrees; place the right toe back down on the floor and note: “Turning.”
9. Lift the left foot and place it next to the right foot and note: “Turning.”
10. Continue to turn until facing the opposite direction; repeat steps 1–9
11. After spending a decent time on walking meditation, acknowledge three times “Standing” and three times “Intending to rest.” If sitting meditation is preferred, acknowledge three times, instead: “Intending to sit.”

**(b) Step-by-step Mindful Sitting Instructions:**

Sit in a cross-legged position, “Half Lotus” can be done by resting the right leg flat on the ground and lifting the left leg to rest on the right one or vice versa. Sit comfortably.

1. Keep the back straight and aligned with the head and neck, and relax every muscle in the body.
2. Gently close your eyes.
3. Adjust the posture until you feel comfortable, balanced, and relaxed.
4. Breathe deeply in and out.
5. Focus the awareness on the movement of the abdomen.
6. When the abdomen expands, acknowledge: “Rising.”
7. When the abdomen contracts, acknowledge: “Falling.”
8. It is essential to be patient and observe every bodily and mental phenomenon that arises at its present moment in every situation.
9. If thoughts start to wander, simply acknowledge “Thinking” or “Knowing” and bring the awareness back to the movement of the abdomen.
10. After exercising like this for 15–30 minutes, mindfully bring the focus back to the conscious mind.
11. Gently open your eyes.
12. Slowly move out of the sitting position.

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<sup>57</sup> Narumon Jiwattanasuk, “A Process of Development for Peaceful Well-Being of Meditation Practitioners through Buddhist Peaceful Means.”

**(c) Mindful sleeping**

Poor-quality sleep can negatively impact individuals' physical and mental well-being, as well as their personal development.<sup>58</sup> Mindful sleeping can improve sleep quality and the practice of mindfulness is also known to ease insomnia and promote good-quality sleep.<sup>59</sup> People who suffer from poor-quality sleep tend to be especially interested in the efficacy of mindfulness meditation;<sup>60</sup> therefore, mindful sleep is included in this study as a means of promoting peaceful physical and psychological well-being.

Jiwattanasuk provides Step-by-step Mindfulness-based Sleeping Instructions for mindful sleeping, as follows:<sup>61</sup>

1. Lie down comfortably on the back.
2. Place both hands on the abdomen.
3. Relax the body and mind.
4. Close your eyes.
5. Breathe in and out steadily and deeply.
6. Focus your attention on the movement of the abdomen.
7. When the abdomen expands, acknowledge: "Rising."
8. When the abdomen contracts, acknowledge: "Falling."
9. Keep doing this until you fall asleep.

**(d) Mindful eating**

Food allergies have become more prevalent in recent years.<sup>62</sup> According to Pandya, mindful eating reduces food allergies in adults and improves their wellbeing.<sup>63</sup> In their study, Shaw & Cassidy observe that mindful eating may be a beneficial intervention to prevent obesity and eating disorders.<sup>64</sup> Choi & Lee also confirm that a mindful eating intervention could be associated with healthy eating behaviour and hence, improve psychological well-being.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Xiaqian Ding, *et al.*, "Relationship between Trait Mindfulness and Sleep Quality in College Students: A Conditional Process Model," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020).

<sup>59</sup> Francesca Perini, *et al.*, "Mindfulness-Based Therapy for Insomnia for Older Adults with Sleep Difficulties: A Randomized Clinical Trial," *Psychological Medicine* 53 (2021): 1038–48.

<sup>60</sup> Heather L. Rusch, *et al.*, "The Effect of Mindfulness Meditation on Sleep Quality: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials," *Annual of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1445 (2018): 5–16.

<sup>61</sup> Narumon Jiwattanasuk, "A Process of Development for Peaceful Well-Being of Meditation Practitioners through Buddhist Peaceful Means."

<sup>62</sup> Mimi L. Tang and Raymond J. Mullins, "Food Allergy: Is Prevalence Increasing?" *Internal Medicine Journal* 47 (2017): 256–61.

<sup>63</sup> Samta P. Pandya, "Adolescents Living with Food Allergies in Select Global Cities: Does a WhatsApp-Based Mindful Eating Intervention Promote Wellbeing and Enhance Their Self-Concept?" *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 55 (2020): 83–94.

<sup>64</sup> Ruth Shaw and Tony Cassidy, "Self-Compassion, Mindful Eating, Eating Attitudes and Wellbeing among Emerging Adults," *The Journal of Psychology* 156 (2021): 33–47.

<sup>65</sup> Seung Hye Choi and Haeyoung Lee, "Associations of Mindful Eating with Dietary Intake Pattern, Occupational Stress, and Mental Well-being among Clinical Nurses," *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 56 (2020): 355–62.



Jiwattanasuk proposes the following Step-by-step Mindful Eating Instructions:<sup>66</sup>

1. Look at the food, mindfully note three times: “Seeing” and “Intending to eat.”
2. Mindfully use both hands to pick the utensils up.
3. Spoon the food onto one utensil, noting: “Spoon, Spoon, Spoon.”
4. After the food has been appropriately placed on the utensil, put one utensil down and place one hand on the knee.
5. Use the other hand to lift the other utensil to the mouth, noting: “Lifting,” and when opening the mouth, note: “Opening the mouth.”
6. Put the spoon into the mouth, noting: “Putting in.”
7. Once the food is in the mouth, acknowledge “Tasting.”
8. Put the other utensil down and place the other hand on the knee.
9. Chew the food thoroughly, acknowledge the taste of the food realistically and note: “Chewing, Tasting, Chewing.”
10. Whether the taste of food is sour, sweet, spicy, salty, etc., note as: “Knowing (the taste), Knowing.”
11. As you are swallowing, note: “Swallowing, Swallowing.”
12. Note intending to take another bite.
13. Repeat steps 1–12, until finished.

## CONCLUSION

Mindfulness practices are a powerful tool for achieving overall human well-being, backed by extensive research. The step-by-step instructions provided in the previous section for various mindfulness practices, including mindful walking, sitting, sleeping, and eating, are evidence-based and have shown positive impacts across multiple dimensions. These practices contribute to better physical health, healthy heart, and sleep quality while enhancing social interactions through increased compassion and prosocial behaviour. They reduce mental distress, improve life quality, and sharpen focus and decision-making, which ultimately lead to peaceful well-being. The results of this study demonstrate that mindfulness-based interventions can significantly improve individuals’ physical, psychological, behavioural, and intellectual well-being. Practitioners can incorporate these practices into their daily lives to attain long-lasting benefits. This article provides clear, concise, and easy-to-follow instructions for various mindfulness practices that can help you achieve a state of peaceful well-being. Looking ahead, the potential for expansion is enormous. Future studies could explore other daily-life mindful activities, such as mindful speaking, to uncover their benefits. Additionally, combining mindfulness with loving-kindness could further enhance its impact on behavioural well-being. In conclusion, the evidence presented in this paper offers a solid, practical basis for incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily life to achieve peaceful well-being. By adopting the step-by-step instructions provided in this article, you can experience the positive impacts of mindfulness practices backed by evidence-based research.

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<sup>66</sup> Narumon Jiwattanasuk, “A Process of Development for Peaceful Well-Being of Meditation Practitioners through Buddhist Peaceful Means.”

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