

Being 'in the Moment'

Sounds great, how do we do it? What does it feel like? What does it look like?

The good news is that it's simple. The bad news is that it's not always easy. More good news – it's like using a muscle, the ability to stay in the *Now* can be easily learned and strengthened by practising. Even brief moments of presence can quickly lead to more presence. Eventually, living in the moment becomes a natural, effortless way of life.

Focusing on the breath keeps us present.

Take a breath. Pay attention to the way the air feels as it fills your lungs and expands your belly. Now relax, and let the next breath come on it's own. Notice how much more present you feel.

Tapping into our senses also brings us to be more fully present.

Part I Hearing the sounds

1. Take a few moments to contemplate the present moment.
2. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you.
3. Hear them as though they were a piece of music.
4. Listen in to the totality of all the sounds without identifying them or giving them meaning.
5. Hear them as pure sound.

You may notice many sounds that you were not aware of when you were not doing the exercise.

Part II

6. Be present to the bodily sensations of sitting.
7. Be present to the temperature of the room.
8. Be present to your breath going in and out.
9. Be present to thoughts playing in your mind.
10. Be present to your mood or feelings in this moment.

Awareness and breath are useful tools to be present. This is where it begins. Unfortunately, we spend a large part of our lives blocking out what we don't want to acknowledge and accept. Feelings, difficult situations, troubling aspects of the world

at large – all these can cause us to shut down, to turn away from what’s actually happening. Whenever this occurs, we lose our connection to the present moment. In the process, we also lose our vitality, our innate joy, and our power to heal and grow.

Most of the time our disconnection from the present moment is unconscious. We’re gone and don’t know it, or we know we’re gone but don’t know why. That’s where this Stressbuster Course comes in. Offering a selection of meditation or contemplation practices for ‘being present’ to try in your own time, with relaxation and breathing exercises, plus a guided visualisation each Friday.

Relax and enjoy! Approach each aspect of this process with a sense of fun and curiosity. It’s about shedding stress, reconnecting with our inner calm and sense of freedom. Not adding more “to-do’s”.

Remember, “the point of power is always the present moment.”

Written based on excerpts from

1. *“How Now 100 ways to celebrate the present moment”*, by Raphael Cushnir
2. *“Happy for No Good Reason”*, by Swami Shankarananda