

Seven ways to improve focusing attention

1. Establish an intention to **sustain your attention** to be mindful. Give yourself a gentle instruction to be attentive, opening to the sense in your body of what mindfulness feels like.
2. **Relax.** Take a series of deep breaths allowing the exhalation to be longer than the inhalation.
3. Consider some of the circumstances in your life until you **feel cared for**, that you matter to someone. It might be an individual or a group. It is all right if the relationship is not perfect. You can also get a sense of your own goodwill, compassion, kindness and love. Warming up the heart in this way helps you feel protected, and brings a reward to the moment.
4. Consider things that help you **feel safer** and thus more able to wrest attention on your activities, rather than vigilantly scanning. Notice that you are likely in a relatively safe setting, to cope with whatever life brings. The governing unreasonable anxiety, any unnecessary guarding or bracing
5. Gently encourage some **positive feelings**, even mild or subtle ones. For example, think of something you feel glad about or grateful for; possibilities may be: important connections to others, being alive or some event you may be looking forward to in the future.
6. Get a **sense of your body** as a whole, its many sensations appearing together each moment in the boundless space of awareness. Sensing your body as a unified whole within a large and panoramic perspective, activates networks on the sides of the brain that support sustained mindfulness. And it deactivates the networks along the midline of the brain that we use when lost in thought.
7. For 10–20–30 seconds in a row, stay with whatever positive experiences you're having or lessons at your learning. Since "neurons that fire together, wire together," this **savouring and registering** helps weave the fruit of your retentive efforts into the fabric of your brain and yourself.