



The Mindful Gnats Workbook.

To Help You Practice Mindfulness
Skills



Gary O' Reilly

This workbook accompanies the "Mindful Gnats" Computer Game. It is designed to help a young person practice the mindfulness skills they learn as they play our game.

Other ways to practice are available through our free "Mindful Gnats" App. It can be downloaded from the iTunes or Google Play Stores



or by watching our practice videos on-line at
www.MindfulGnats.com

Mindful Gnats is produced on a not-for-profit basis by
Handaxe Community Interest Company.

Like to learn more about our games? Please visit us at
www.PeskyGnats.com

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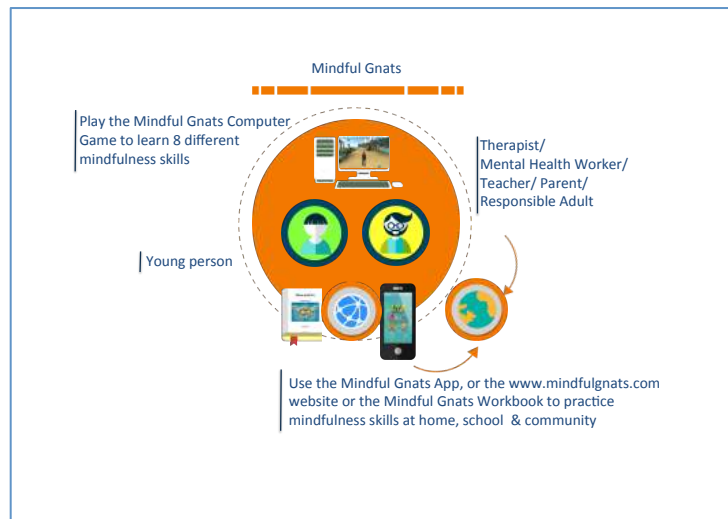
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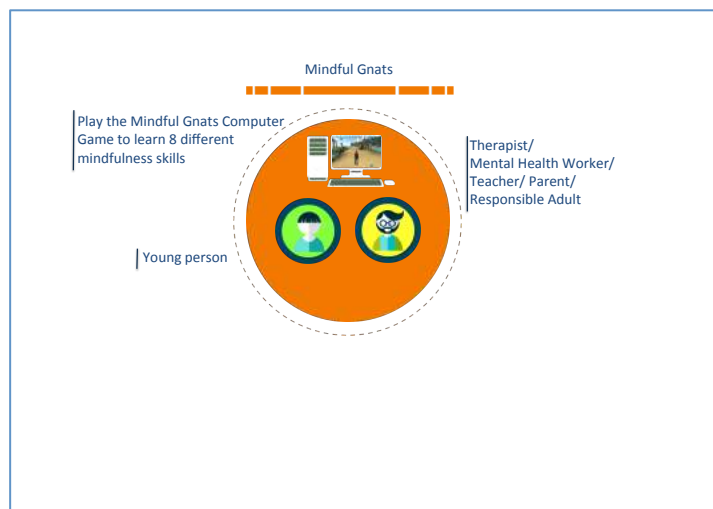
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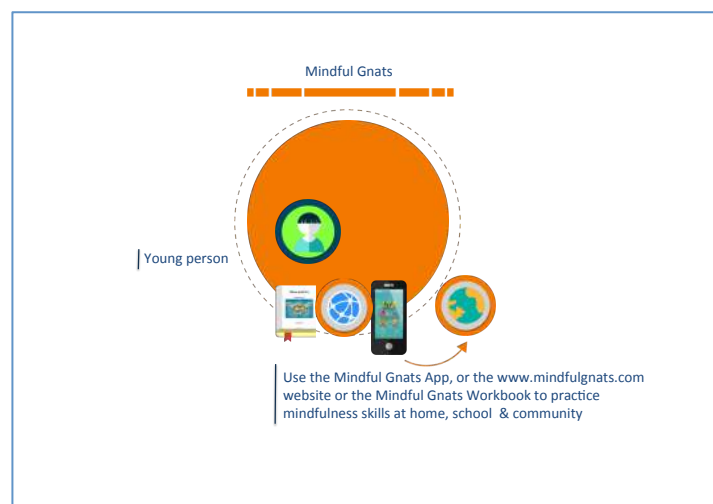
Mindful Gnats is designed to teach you Mindfulness Skills.



Each skill is taught and practiced in two stages... First you play a level of the Mindful Gnats computer game to learn a skill.

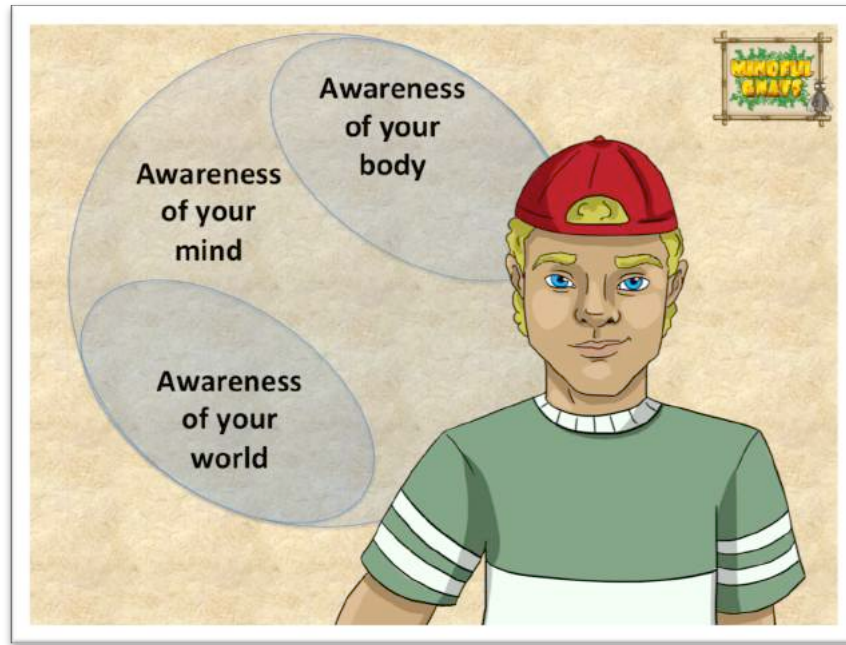


Then you use our free Mindful Gnats App, the www.MindfulGnats.com website or this workbook to help you practice that skill before playing the next level of the computer game where you then learn another new skill.

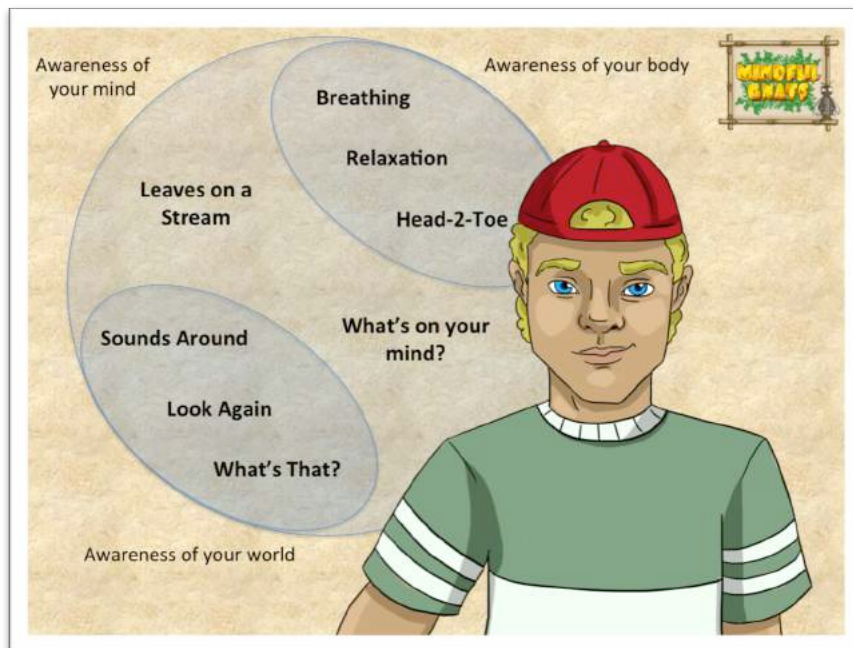


Mindfulness is the useful skill of being aware of what's happening now without judging what's happening. Sounds easy but it takes practice to do that.

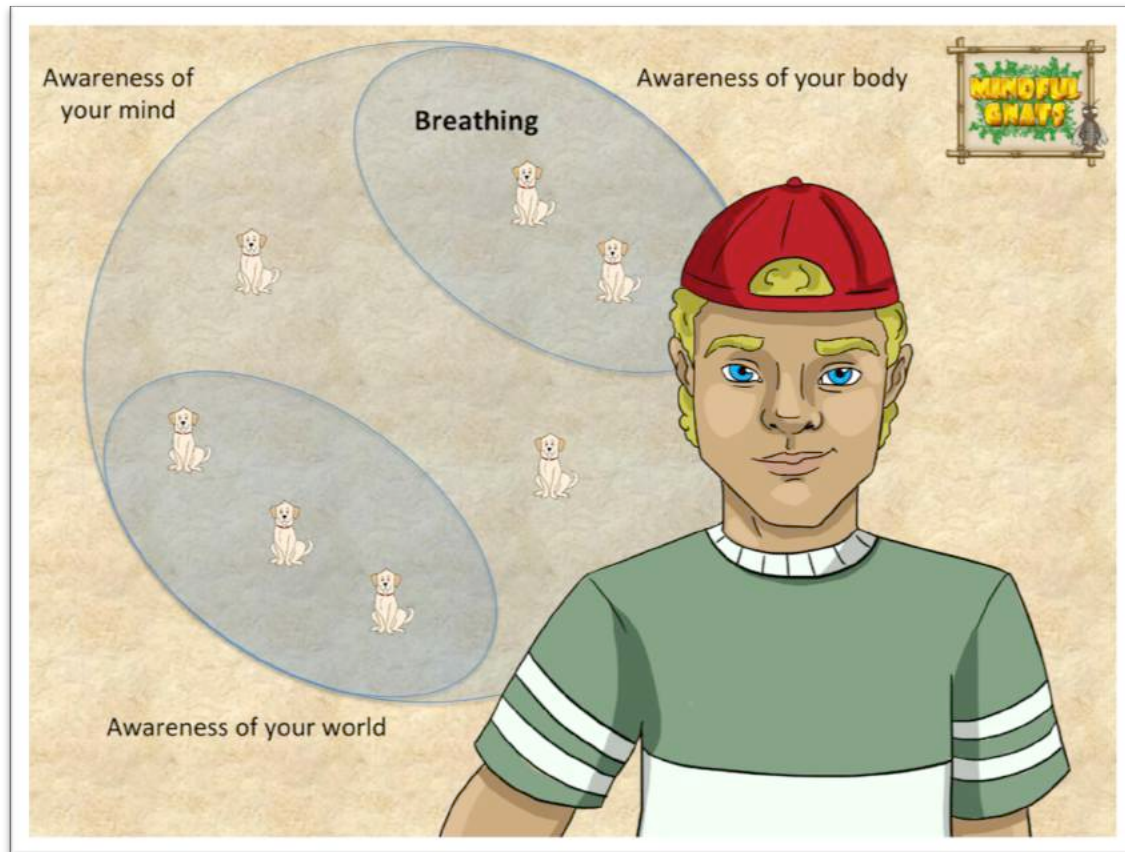
By playing Mindful Gnats you learn skills to help your awareness in three areas... 1. Awareness of your body. 2. Awareness of your mind. And 3. Awareness of your world.



As you progress through the game you unlock 8 mindfulness skills to help you become more aware in each area.



Mindful Gnats Game Level 1 Practice



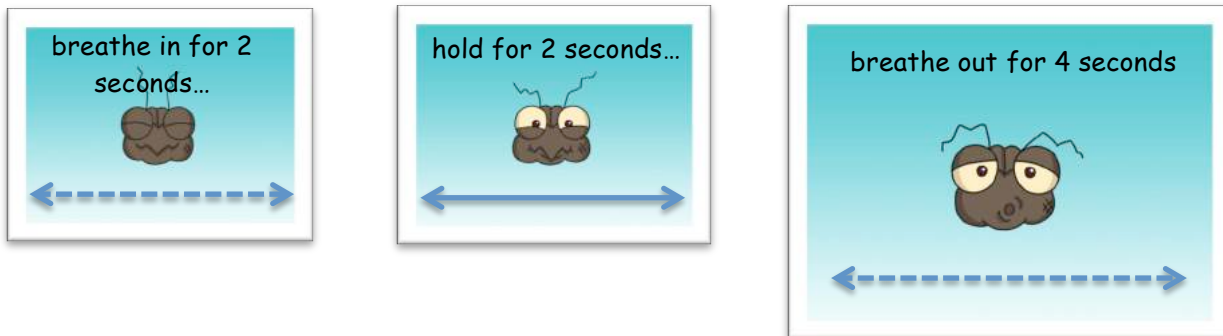
Awareness of your body skill 1: Breathing

The aim of this skill is to help you notice your breathing...

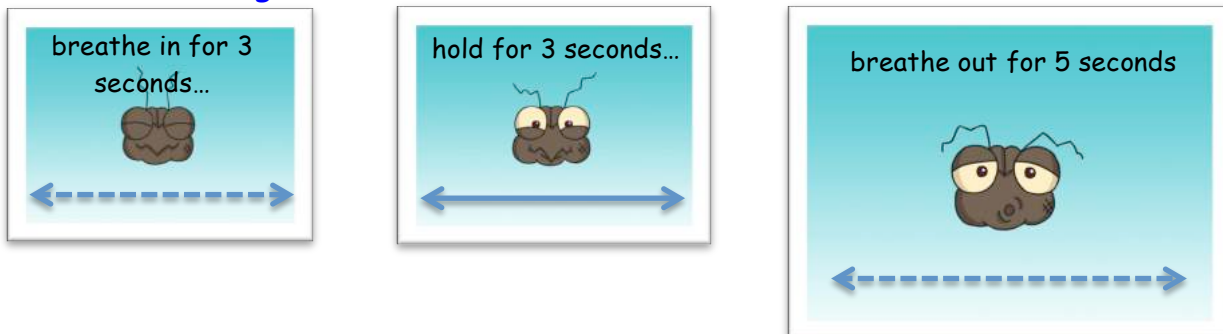
1. Get a watch or timer to help you.
2. Decide how long you would like to do the exercise for. We suggest you begin by doing this breathing exercise for one minute.
3. Choose your breathing pace and start. Remember to breathe out for longer than you breathe in or hold your breath. So if you breathe in for 2 seconds, you hold for 2 seconds, and breathe out for 4 seconds.

Become Aware of how you feel as you control the pace of your breathing...

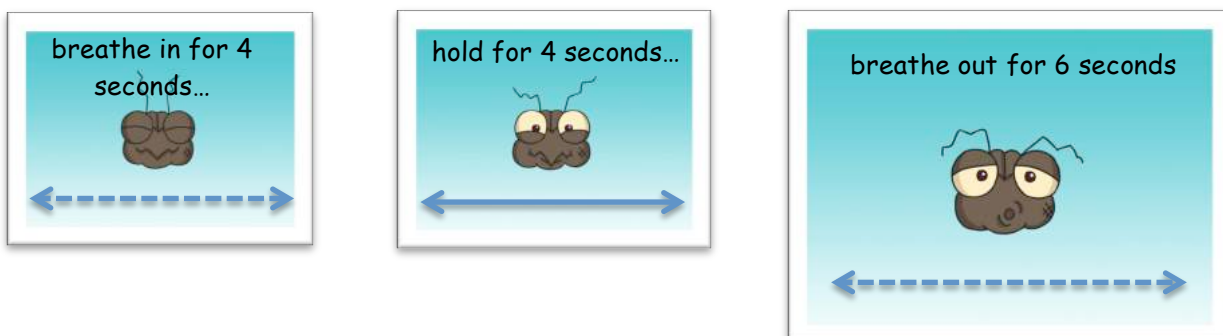
Paced Breathing for 1 minute: 2 seconds in, 2 seconds hold, 4 seconds out



Paced Breathing for 1 minute: 3 seconds in, 3 seconds hold, 5 seconds out



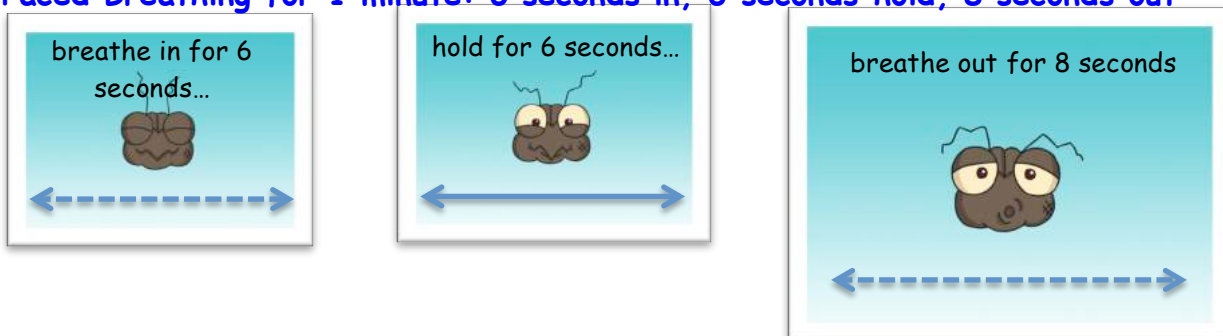
Paced Breathing for 1 minute: 4 seconds in, 4 seconds hold, 6 seconds out



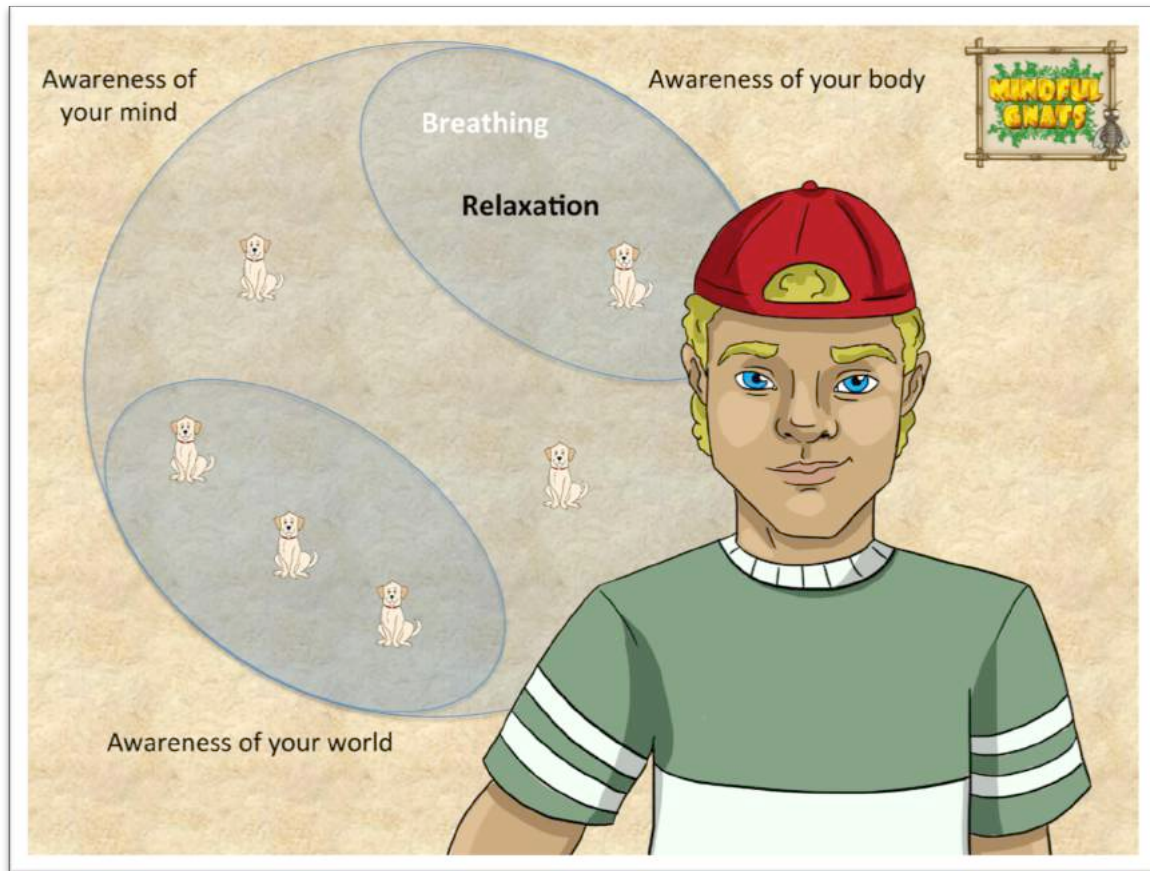
Paced Breathing for 1 minute: 5 seconds in, 5 seconds hold, 7 seconds out



Paced Breathing for 1 minute: 6 seconds in, 6 seconds hold, 8 seconds out



Mindful Gnats Game Level 1 Practice



Awareness of your body skill 2: Chill Relaxation

The aim of this skill is to help you relax. You will work your way around different parts of your body, tensing up some muscles and then allowing them to relax. Then you will imagine some nice relaxing things...

1. The first couple of times ask someone to read the relaxation exercise aloud to you in a calm, relaxed, quiet voice. Ask them to do this until you have learnt this skill well enough to do it from memory. Or you could record yourself reading the instructions and replay your recording when you want to do your relaxation.
2. Set aside 10 minutes each day to practice your relaxing. Try to do these exercises at the same time and in the same place each day.
3. Before you begin, remove all distractions (by turning off bright lights, the TV etc.) and loosen any tight clothing (like belts, ties, and shoes). Recline on a bed or in a comfortable chair with your eyes lightly closed.

Become Aware of how you feel as you tense and relax your muscles...

Area	Tense & Relax...
Hands	Close your hands into fists. Then allow them to open slowly. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in your hands and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles of your hands become more and more relaxed.
Arms	Bend your arms at the elbow and touch your shoulders with your hands. Then allow them to return to the resting position. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in your arms and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles of your arms become more and more relaxed.
Shoulders	Hunch your shoulders up to your ears. Then allow them to return to the resting position. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in your shoulders and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles of your shoulders become more and more relaxed.
Legs	Point your toes downwards. Then allow them to return to the resting position. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in the fronts of your legs and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles in the fronts of your legs become more and more relaxed. Point your toes upwards. Then allow them to return to the resting position. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in the backs of your legs and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles in the backs of your legs become more and more relaxed.
Stomach	Take a deep breath and hold it for three seconds, tensing the muscles in your stomach as you do so. Then breathe out slowly. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in your stomach muscles and allow this change to continue further and further still, so your stomach muscles become more and more relaxed.
Face	Clench your teeth tightly together. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in your jaw and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles in your jaw become more and more relaxed. Wrinkle your nose up. Then relax. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in the muscles around the front of your face and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles of your face become more and more relaxed. Shut your eyes tightly. Then relax. Notice the change from tension to relaxation in the muscles around your eyes and allow this change to continue further and further still, so the muscles around your eyes become more and more relaxed.

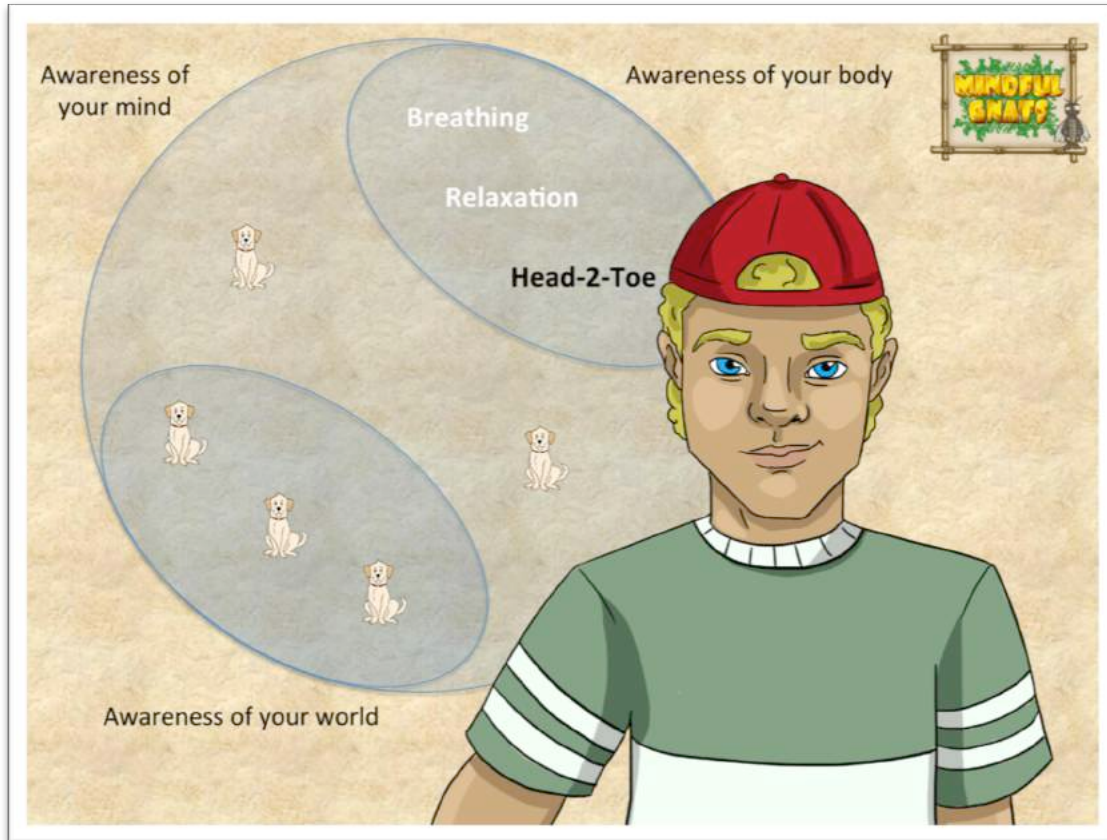
All over	Now that you've done all of your exercises, check that all areas of your body are as relaxed as can be. Think of your hands and allow them to relax a little more. Think of your arms and allow them to relax a little more. Think of your shoulders and allow them to relax a little more. Think of your legs and allow them to relax a little more. Think of your stomach and allow it to relax a little more. Think of your face and allow it to relax a little more.
Breathing	Breathe in.....one...two...three...and out slowly,one...two...three...four...five...six...and again. Breathe in.....one...two...three...and out slowly,one...two...three...four...five...six...and again. Breathe in.....one...two...three...and out slowly,one...two...three...four...five...six.
Imagine	Imagine you are lying on a beautiful sandy beach and you feel the sun warm your body. Make a picture in your mind of the golden sand and the warm sun. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. The sky is a clear, clear blue. Above you, you can see a small white cloud drifting away into the distance. It is drifting away and you feel more and more relaxed. It is drifting away and you feel more and more relaxed. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. As the cloud drifts away you feel more and more relaxed. Now relax for 30 seconds. When you are ready, open your eyes, ready to face the rest of the day relaxed and calm.

What did you notice from your practice?

1. Breathing: What did you notice from your breathing practice? Did you notice a difference in your body as you paced your breathing?

2. Relaxation: What did you notice from your relaxation practice? Did you find some parts of your body were already tense? What was it like to let your muscles relax? Were you able to imagine the sun warm you?

Mindful Gnats Game Level 2 Practice



Awareness of your body skill 3: Body Scan from Head-2-Toe

The aim of this skill is to help you become aware of your body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head!

1. The first couple of times ask someone to read the exercise aloud to you in a calm, relaxed, quiet voice. Ask them to do this until you have learnt the skill well enough to do it from memory. Or you could record yourself reading the instructions and replay your recording when you want to practice this skill.
2. Set aside 10 minutes each day to practice Head-2-Toe. You can practice this skill at different times and places or the same time and place each day. Pick whichever you prefer.

Become Aware of how you feel physically...

Get comfortable in your chair. You can close your eyes if you like or keep them open. Let's start by becoming mindfully aware of the moment we are in right now. Let's do this by beginning to notice our breathing. Take a deep breath. Notice yourself breathe in... and notice as you breathe out...

Become aware of where you are. Are you with someone or are you on your own... ? Take another deep breath. Notice yourself breathe in... and notice as you breathe out...

Roughly what time of day is it? Is it morning, afternoon, evening or night time? Take another deep breath. Notice yourself breathe in... and notice as you breathe out...

Notice your mind. Are you calm or is your mind busy? Become aware of any feelings you have. How do you feel physically? Are you feeling awake, tired, hungry, comfortable? Become aware of how you feel emotionally. Notice your mood? Are you happy, sad, worried or ok? Notice any stress you feel in your body? Where do you notice it? Take another deep breath. Notice yourself breathe in... and notice as you breathe out...



[slowly] Now notice your feet. Bring the focus of your attention to your feet... notice your toes, the soles of your feet, your ankles. Notice any sensations you have in your feet.

[slowly] Now notice your legs... notice your shins, the back of your legs, your knees, your calves, the front of your legs, your hips... notice any feelings

you have all over your legs...

[slowly] Now bring the focus of your attention to your upper body... Notice any feeling you have in your stomach, notice your chest, can you feel your breath go in and out... notice your back... notice your shoulders... people often feel stress in their shoulders... do you notice any?





[slowly] Now pay attention to your arms. Notice your upper arms...your triceps and biceps... how do your arms feel? notice your elbows...your lower arms... your wrists, your hands, your fingers and thumbs... notice all the feelings in your arms...

Bring your attention back to your shoulders and neck how do they feel? Move your head as you notice how it feels. Bring your attention to your face, notice your chin and your lips, your nose and cheeks, your eyes and ears, your forehead. Notice your hair, notice the top of your head.



[slowly] Now notice your whole body and all the things you became aware of as you scanned your body with your attention. Notice how you feel. Notice again how you are breathing. Notice as you take a deep breath in and notice as you take a deep breath out...



Take a moment to continue to notice your breathing... And when your ready open your eyes if they were closed and bring your attention back to where you are now.

Head-2-Toe Body Scan:

Where did you notice you are?

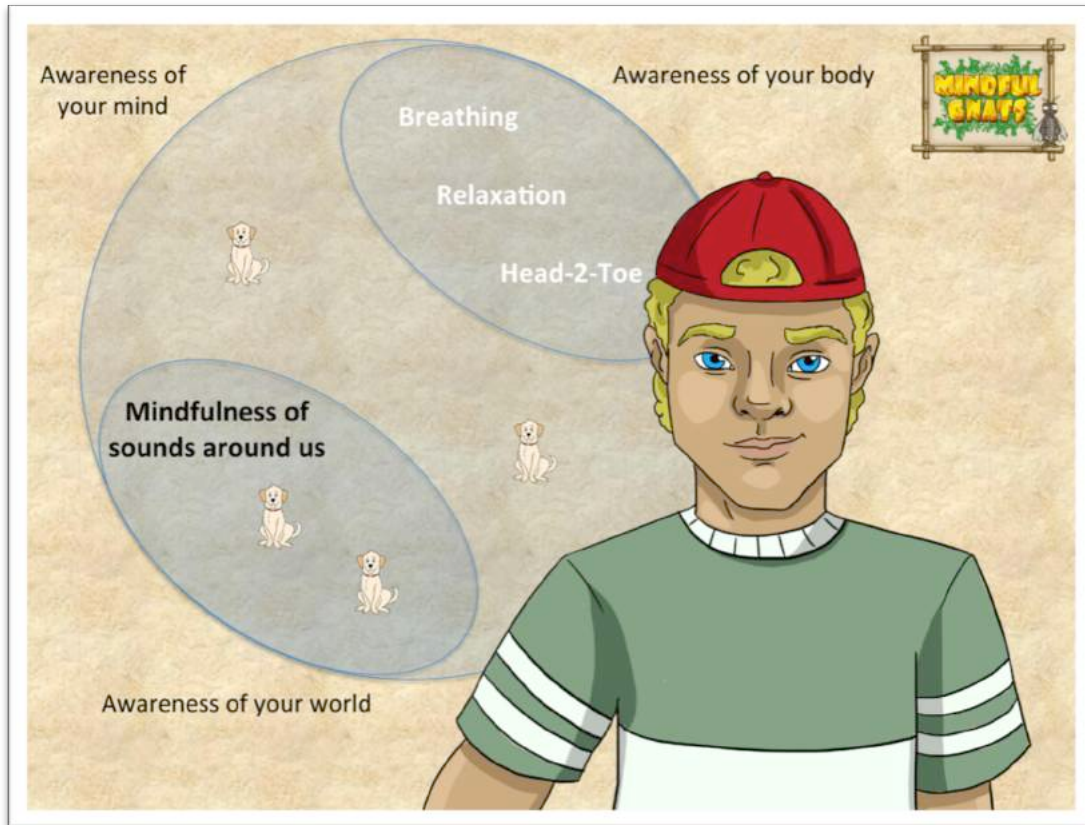
What time of day did you notice it is?

Did you notice if your mind is busy or calm?

What did you notice about your mood?

What did you notice about your body as you scanned it from head to toe?

Mindful Gnats Game Level 3 Practice



Awareness of your world 1: Sounds Around

The aim of this skill is to help you become aware of your world without judging what you hear.

1. In this skill you will listen to all the sounds around you that you can hear for one minute
2. Remember to notice the sound and not the label your mind gives it. So you might notice the sound "tweet-tweet" and not the label your mind gives it "bird-song".
3. If your mind wanders just notice that too and bring your attention back to listening.
4. Set aside 1 minute each day to practice listening to the sounds around you. Try to do it at different times and places.

Become Aware of the sounds around you and how your mind labels the noises that you hear...



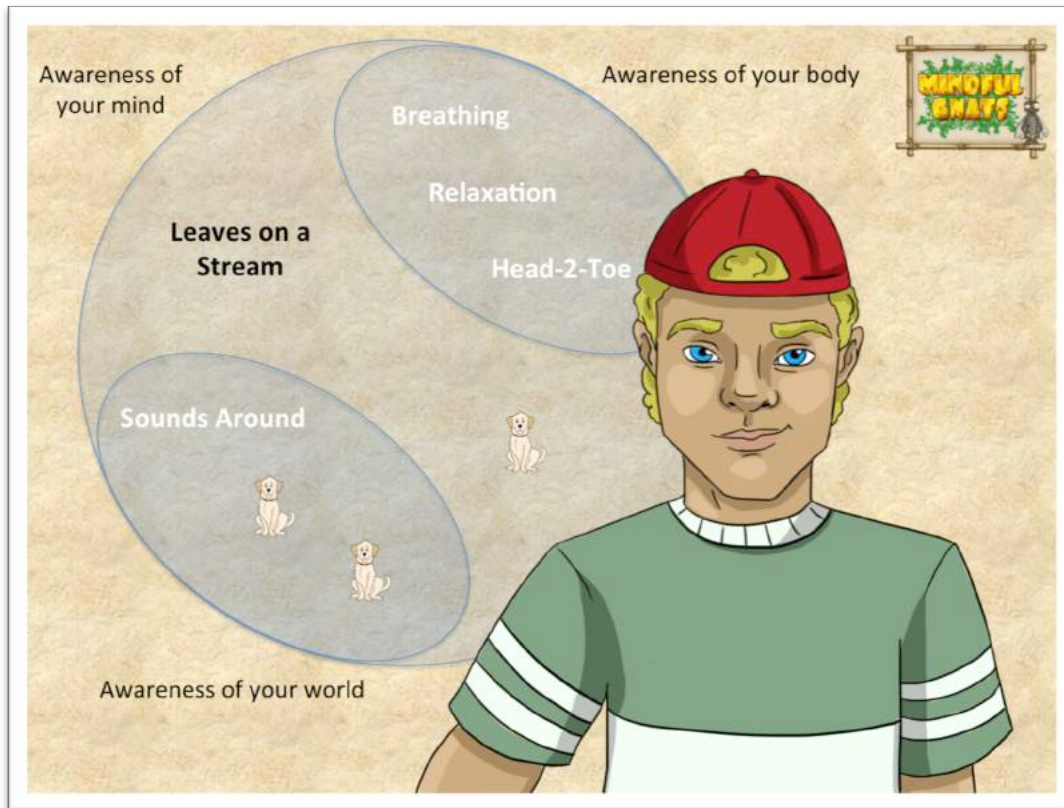
Sounds Around: What sounds did you notice?

Did you notice a difference between a sound you heard and a label your mind gave the sound?

Did your mind wander and were you able to return your attention to listening?

Mindful Gnats Game Level 4 Practice

Awareness of your mind 1: Leaves on a stream

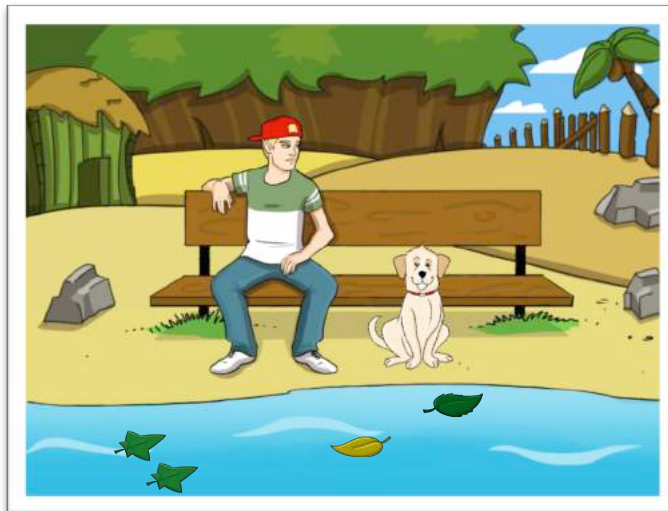


The aim of this skill is to help you become aware of the thoughts that pass through your mind from moment to moment and that all your thoughts come and go...

1. Decide how long you would like to practice this skill for. We suggest you start by practicing it for one minute and then the more you practice, the longer you can do it for.
2. In this skill you will imagine sitting by a stream. You will notice your thoughts and let them float away as if they are leaves on a stream.
3. If your mind wanders just notice that too and bring your attention back to noticing the thoughts flowing through your mind.

Become Aware of the thoughts that pass though your mind...

When you are ready...Imagine you are sitting on the bank of a stream watching the water as leaves flow past you.



You could simply watch and notice them go by. You would see there is always another leaf further upstream that will pass along shortly.

Sometimes a few leaves would pass you. Other times maybe no leaves would pass. Sometimes lots of leaves might pass together. Sometimes they might flow quickly, and sometimes they might flow slowly.

Sometimes the leaves that pass are ones that might grab your attention for some reason. Sitting on the bankside you could notice that attention grabbing leaf, let it go and then watch and wait for the next leaf that comes along.

Now, imagine your thoughts are like leaves flowing on a stream...



As you notice a thought.....imagine putting it onto a leaf on the stream... and letting it go.... and then wait until you notice the next thought coming along. Remember this skill is not about controlling your thoughts or getting rid of unpleasant thoughts or waiting for nice ones to come along.



The aim of this skill is to simply notice that your thoughts are like leaves on a stream, always moving on...Sometimes you might think a little...or you might think a lot...

But all your thoughts come and go... If your mind wanders just notice that and return your attention to noticing the thoughts that come to mind and imagine putting them on a leaf and let them float on....



Sometimes you might get stuck on thoughts that grab your attention...

But all your thoughts come and go. Even worry thoughts or sad thoughts...



If you think "this is stupid" ...
or "this is boring" ...
or "I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be doing?!" or
something like that...

Well, just notice that's a thought too and put it on a leaf
and wait for the next thought to come along.

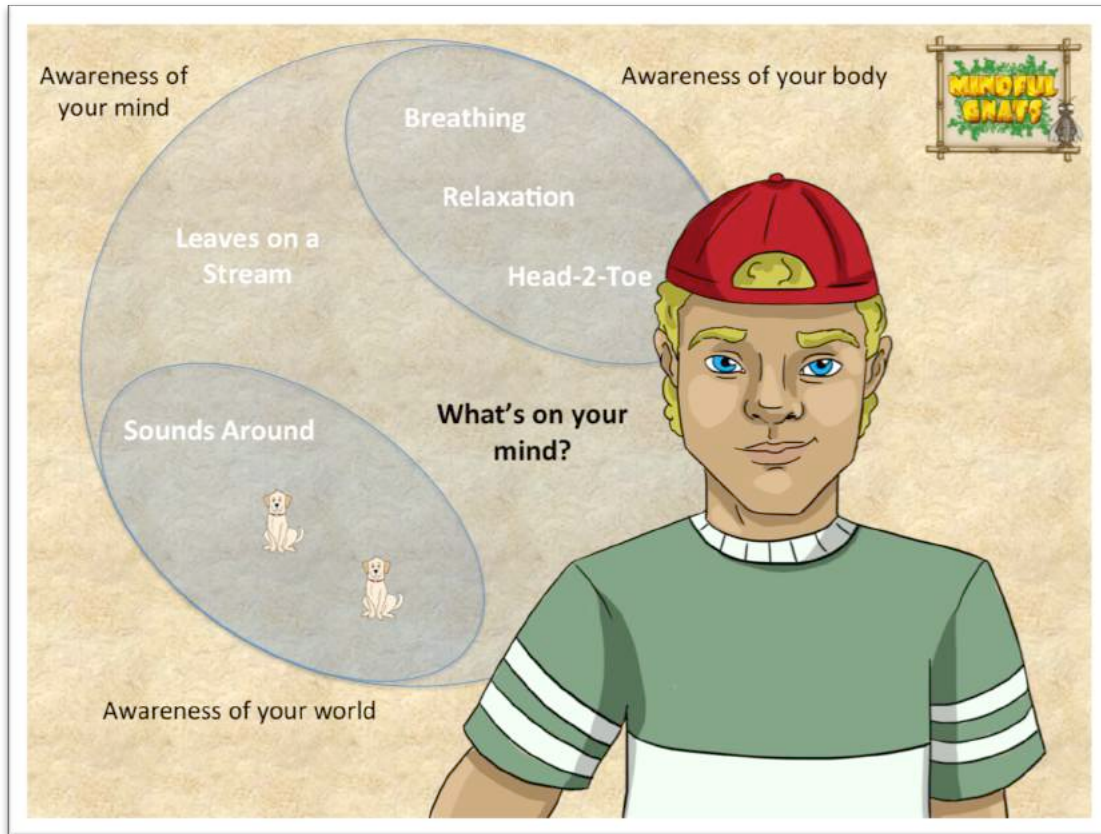
When you are ready begin... Notice each thought, imagine placing it on a leaf and let it float on. If your thoughts stop just imagine watching the stream until the next one comes along.

Leaves on a Stream: What did you notice as you watched your thoughts go by?

Were there any thoughts that grabbed your attention?

Did your mind wander and were you able to return your attention to noticing your thoughts?

Mindful Gnats Game Level 5 Practice



Awareness of your mind 2: What's on your mind?

The aim of this skill is to help you become aware of the different types of thoughts and emotions and other things that can pass through your mind

1. Decide how long you would like to practice this skill for. We suggest you start by practicing it for one minute and then the more you practice, the longer you can do it for.
2. In this skill you will build on the skills you learnt in "leaves on a stream". . You will notice the types of thoughts that pass through your mind as well as noticing different feelings you might have.
3. If your mind wanders just notice that too and bring your attention back to noticing the thoughts and feelings on your mind.

Become Aware of the types of thoughts and feelings that pass though your mind...

You are going to practice noticing all the different **types** of things that pass through your mind without getting caught up with them.

So, this skill helps you become more aware of what's happening in your mind as well as knowing that everything that's on your mind, whether its good or bad, easy or hard, is a passing event.

So what types of things pass through our minds? Well, here's a few different types of things to look out for.



There are **thoughts**, these are the ideas we have from moment to moment to moment. You might have a thought in words or it might be a picture in your head.

Some thoughts are positive...

Some thoughts are negative...

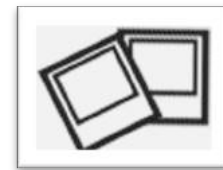
Some thoughts are neutral...

Some thoughts are **memories**. These are thoughts about things that happened in the past. They might have happened long ago or very recently. They can be about anything.

Some memories are good...

Some memories are bad...

Some memories are neutral...



Sometimes our minds **imagine**. Our imagination is rich and we can imagine all sorts of things.

We might invent something new in our imagination that no-one ever thought of before. Sometimes we imagine things like stories we tell our friends or stories in a book or film.

You can also imagine what might happen in your own life or in the lives' of people you know. We can imagine what we think is just about to happen.

Or we can imagine something that might happen in a little while, or at any time in the future. Imaging something could happen doesn't mean it will.

The things we imagine can be positive... negative... or neutral...



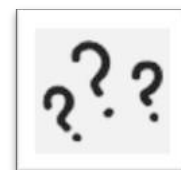
Sometimes we make **judgements**, these give your opinion about something. Just like judges on the X-factor give their opinion on the acts they see. We might judge things that happen. We might judge ourselves, or judge other people. Our judgements can be positive... negative... or neutral...



Sometimes our mind has **feelings**. These are the emotions we have like happy, sad, or worried.

Our feelings can be positive... negative... or neutral...

Finally, there are **other things**. These don't fit neatly into any of our categories so far. See if you notice any other things as you notice what's on your mind.



So spend some time simply letting your mind wander and notice what's on your mind...?



Did you notice any **thoughts**?

Did you notice any **memories**?

Did you notice **imaginings**?

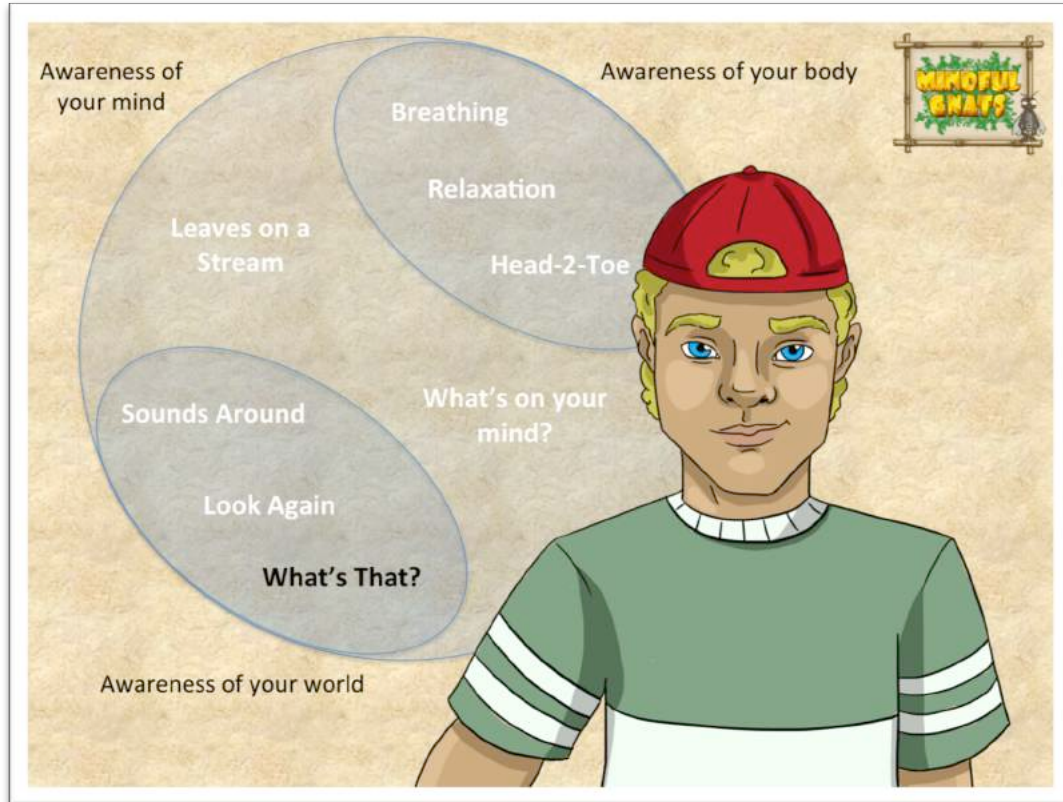
Did you notice any **judgements**?

Did you notice any **feelings**?

Did you notice **other things**?

Mindful Gnats Game Level 6 Practice

Awareness of your world 2: What's that? Mindfulness of an Object

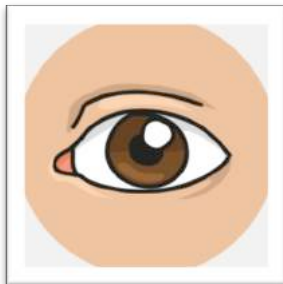
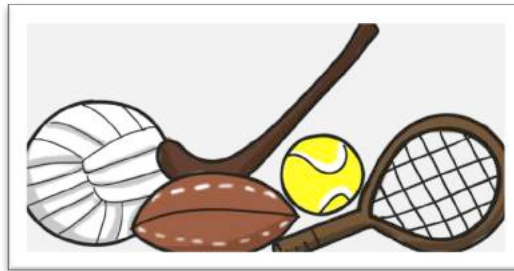
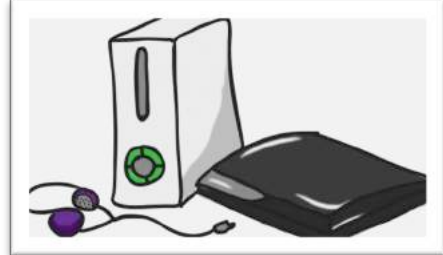


The aim of this skill is use all your senses to notice something everyday and familiar in a new way

1. Pick any object that is everyday and familiar to you.
2. Follow the guide on the next two pages to use each of your senses to really pay attention to the object you picked.

Become Aware of something new about something familiar...

We're going to notice something everyday and familiar by paying close attention to it. Please pick any object from somewhere close by. The item you pick can be any thing at all but here's some suggestions that might help you pick something...



Pick up the item you chose and have a **look** at it and notice these things about it. You don't have to write your answers anywhere.

- What colour is it?
- What shape is it?
- Is it large or small?
- Is it thick or thin?
- Does it have any writing or marks on it?
- Does it look the same or different all over?

And now if its safe to do so **touch** it. Feel it with in your hands and notice these things about it?

- Is it hard or soft?
- Is it smooth or rough?
- Is it rigid or changeable to your touch?
- Is it heavy or light?
- Is it cold or warm?
- Does it feel the same all over?

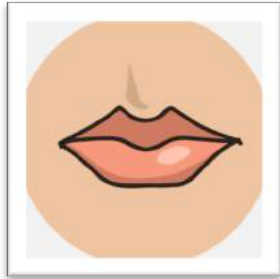


Now listen to it. Can you **hear** it make any noise?

- What noise does it make?
- Does the noise change?
- Or is it silent?
- If you can touch it or move it does it make a noise?

And now use your sense of **smell** to notice your object.

- What it smell like?
- Does it have a strong or a weak smell?
- Does it smell new or old?
- Does it smell familiar?
- Does it smell the same all over?



Only if you've picked a food item that is safe for you to eat use your sense of **taste** to notice your object.

- What does it tastes like?
- Does it taste smooth or hard or crumbly?
- Does it taste sweet or sour or bitter?
- Does the taste change or stay the same?

Mindfulness of an Object: What did you notice?

Describe something you noticed from each of the senses you used?



Sight?



Touch?



Hearing?



Smell?



Taste?



Great work on practicing all of your mindfulness skills. Before you go name something you became aware of in each area from your practice.

1. Awareness of my **body**:

2. Awareness of my **world**:

3. Awareness of my **mind**:

Remember to stay curious about your body, mind and world.