

Top 3 Mindfulness Resources for Medical Doctors



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Mindfulness is en vogue: the search volume has nearly quadrupled over the last 5 years according to Google Trends and the PubMed results count echoes this exponential growth as well.

Mindfulness began to gain momentum in the Western medical community after the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center by Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn back in the 1970s.

More recently, a JAMA paper notes that “participation in a mindful communication program was associated with short-term and sustained improvements in well-being and attitudes associated with patient-centered care.” A study in the Annals of Family Medicine states that “clinicians rating themselves as more mindful engage in more patient-centered communication and have more satisfied patients” while another one points out that “participating in an abbreviated mindfulness training course adapted for primary care clinicians was associated with reductions in indicators of job burnout, depression, anxiety, and stress.”

Naturally, more studies are required to reach rigorous conclusions, but there’s hope that mindfulness has some benefits in store for doctors both personally and professionally. For those interested in finding out more and the few brave souls wishing to try it on themselves, below are some of the best resources:

1. Another doctor’s battle stories

Now a professor, then a third-year Harvard medical student, Ronald Epstein was moved by the experience of watching an surgeon fail to notice that his 18-year-old patient's kidney had turned blue. This set Epstein on a path of studying what makes doctors present and how it benefits their practice. A University of Rochester Medical Center professor of Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Oncology, and Medicine, he recently wrote the book *Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity*.



2. Our omnipresent companion: the smartphone

If, having updated the Clinical Handbooks collection and the BNF, the doctor finds themselves with a few megabytes to spare, a mindfulness app could be a good choice. The more famous apps include *Calm* and *Headspace*. These apps consist of guided meditations, recordings that encourage the listener to pay attention to their breath and their inevitably wandering mind - as an observer. Depending on the exact app, they feature endearing cartoon videos and soothing nature sounds. The apps are intended to be used daily for approximately 10 minutes.

3. Doctor wellness experts

[Stanford School of Medicine](#) collected a number of mindfulness resources aimed at doctors. In addition to mindfulness tips, their WellMD section provides targeted advice to help doctors to lead a healthier lifestyle through building exercise habits as well as advice for coping with stress.

Written by Dr Martina Feyzrakhmanova, Senior Editor at Healthmanagement.org

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