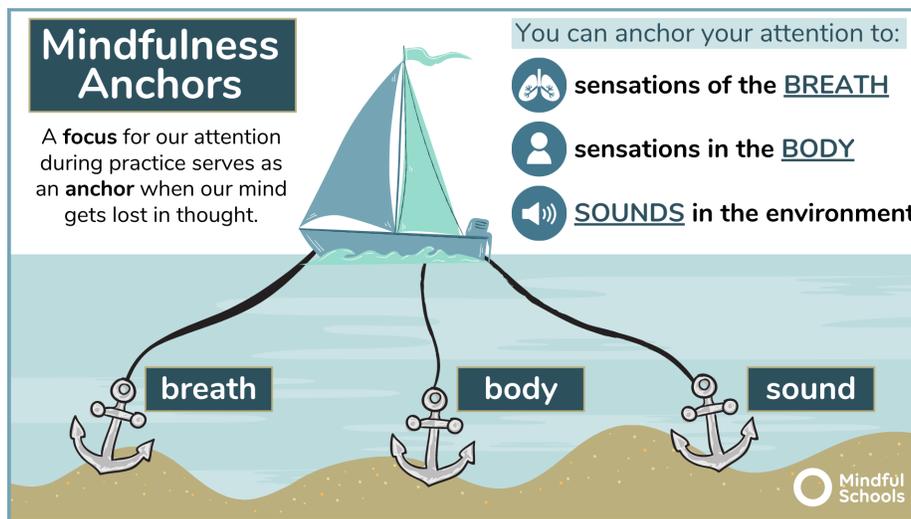


3 Simple Ways to Refocus Attention with Mindfulness Anchors

Distractions are constant. Luckily, paying attention is a natural capacity that all of us have—we just exercise it differently. Discover three strategies to practice focusing with mindfulness anchors. Then, learn a guided practice to introduce in your classroom.



What is a Mindfulness Anchor?

A **mindfulness anchor** is a focus point for our attention during practice. Just like an anchor keeps a ship from drifting in turbulent waters, a focus point for our attention like counting, breathing, or noticing sounds, or body sensations can serve as a place to come back to when our mind, inevitably, gets lost in thought.

Three Guided Audio Practices: Anchoring to Sound, Breath, and Body Sensations

Try practicing these in a comfortable seated position, while standing, or while laying down:

- [Mindfulness of Sound](#) (6 min)
- [Mindfulness of Breath](#) (6 min)
- [Mindfulness of Body Sensations](#) (7 min)

You might also try practicing with anchors for your attention throughout your day —perhaps before or after driving somewhere, in the shower, before starting a lesson with your students, or as you tuck yourself (or your children) into bed each night.

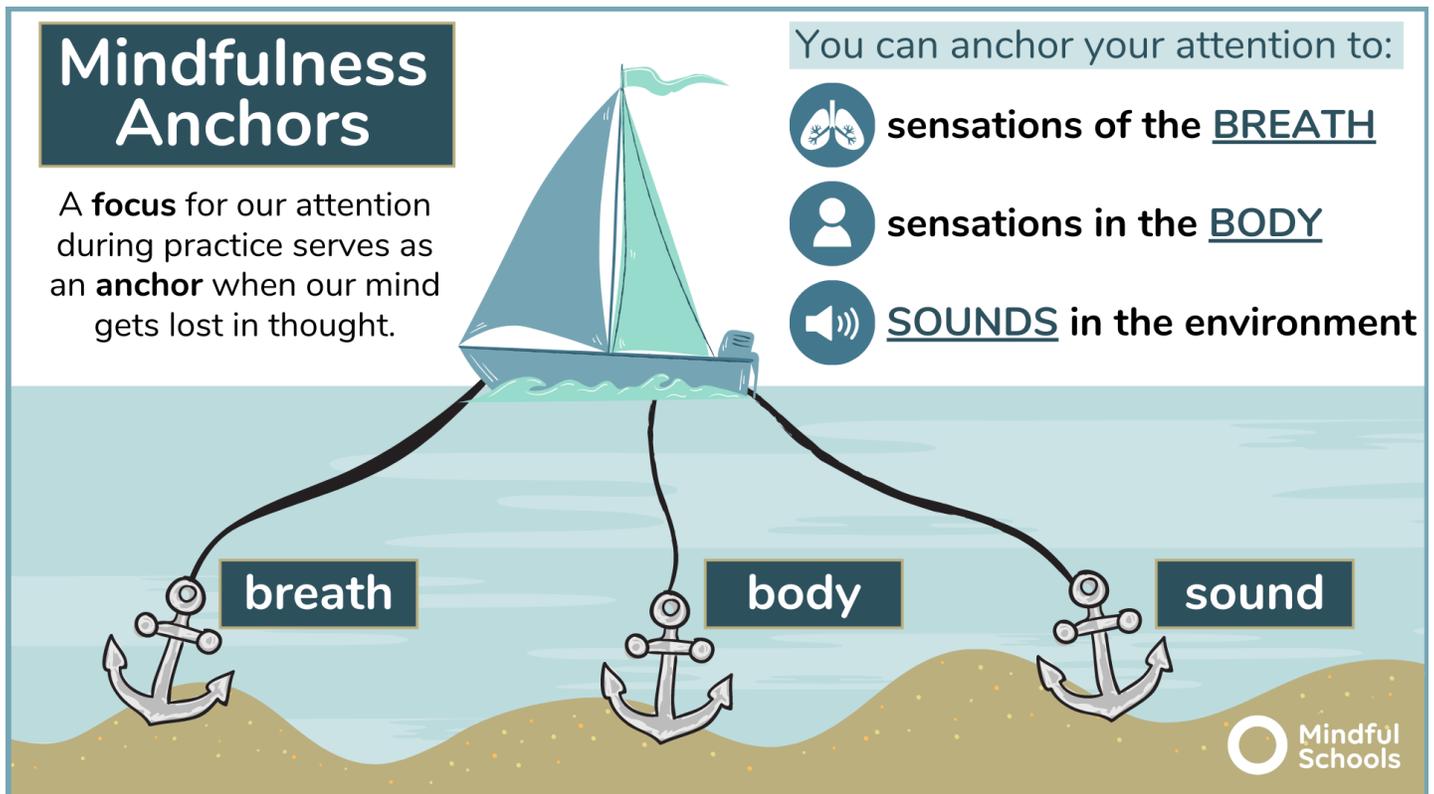
However you choose to practice, you may notice that the quality of your attention changes from day to day. Some days it's easy to be focused and attentive, and other days it can feel impossible. That's okay. With mindfulness, we kindly notice what's arising in the present moment. No judgment needed.

Discover more mindfulness strategies in the **101: Mindfulness Foundations** course.
www.mindfulschools.org

Mindfulness Anchors in the Classroom

Mindfulness anchors are a strategy we explore in multiple lessons in the **Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum**. One of the first anchors we teach is mindful listening, or *sound*, with a guided practice and classroom discussion, see below.

Discover the full Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum in the **201: Mindfulness in the Classroom** course.



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Guided Practice for Your Classroom

Try this guided practice to introduce mindful listening to your students. You'll need a bell or chime to ring, or you could use an app with bell sounds.

Mindful Listening: Guided Practice

Take a moment to settle into a comfortable position. In just a moment, I'll ring the bell. *[Ring bell.]*

What did you notice? Would you like to hear it again?

Okay, but this time, turn your mindful ears on. That means you listen very carefully, the whole time. So, see if you can pay attention from the very first moment you hear the bell all the way to the end. Raise your hand when the sound is gone. *[Ring bell.]*

Notice if that was easy or hard. Let's try it one more time with our eyes closed or gazing down at the floor. So right now let your eyes close or let them gently gaze down, whichever feels better for you right now. Listen just like you did before to the entire sound, and raise your hand when the sound is gone for you. *[Ring bell.]*

We can also listen this carefully to any sound. There are lots of sounds around us all the time. If we listen very carefully, we might hear things we don't normally hear. Let's keep our mindful bodies on, with our eyes closed or gazing down, and listen to the sounds around us. We might hear sounds in the classroom or outside, or even in our own bodies.

[Mindful Listening for about one minute.]

In just a moment, I'll ring the bell one more time to end our mindful listening practice.

Classroom Debrief

After each practice, the Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum offers questions for classroom discussion that allow students to make sense of the experience they had in the guided practice. Use the prompts to allow students to report out about their experience, validate and support their experiences, and help them make connections to the qualities of mindfulness they notice (awareness, observation, openness, compassion, etc.).

Mindful Listening: Debrief Question

What are the sounds around me?

Share with someone next to you about some sounds that you noticed.

Who would like to share what they heard?

What did it feel like to simply listen for sounds?

Sound can be a mindfulness anchor. An anchor helps keep a boat where it is. If the boat starts to drift away, the anchor pulls it back in. That is what sounds are doing for our minds. Sometimes when we try to focus on the sounds around us, we might find that our minds start thinking instead of focusing on what we can hear. When our minds wander away from sounds or start to think about things, we can notice it and bring our attention right back to our anchor.

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