



S

Stop what you're doing; put things down for a minute.

T

Take a few deep breaths. If you'd like to extend this, you can take a minute to breathe normally and naturally and follow your breath coming in and out of your nose. You can even say to yourself "in" as you're breathing in and "out" as you're breathing out if that helps with concentration.

O

Observe your experience just as it is—including thoughts, feelings, and emotions. You can reflect about what is on your mind and also notice that **thoughts** are not facts, and they are not permanent. Notice any **emotions** present and how they're being expressed in the body. Research shows that just naming your emotions can turn the volume down on the fear circuit in the brain and have a calming effect. Then notice your **body**. Are you standing or sitting? How is your posture? Any aches or pains?

P

Proceed with something that will support you in the moment: talk to a friend, rub your shoulders, have a cup of tea.

Treat this whole exercise as an experiment: Get curious about where there are opportunities in the day for you to just STOP—waking up in the morning, taking a shower, before eating a meal, at a stop light, before sitting down at work and checking email.

You can even use your smartphone's message indicator as a reminder to STOP, cultivating more mindfulness with technology.

What would it be like in the days, weeks, and months ahead if you started stopping more often?

—Elisha Goldstein