

# ATTENTION TRAINING TO IMPROVE FOCUS & REDUCE SOCIAL ANXIETY

## WORKSHEET

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Attention training is a type of intervention that helps people with social anxiety develop skills to better manage their attention and focus on the present moment. It involves specific exercises designed to improve attentional control, reduce distraction, and increase mental flexibility.

Many people with social anxiety experience a heightened self-focus and rumination, which can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and contribute to negative thought patterns. Attention training can help individuals learn to shift their focus away from negative self-talk and intrusive thoughts, and instead focus on the present moment and their surroundings. This can lead to increased feelings of calm, improved emotional regulation, and reduced anxiety.

Some people may find it helpful to practice daily for a few minutes, while others may prefer longer practice sessions a few times a week. It's important to find a routine that works for you and to stick to it consistently to reap the benefits of attention training.

### Exercise 1: Mindful Breathing

This exercise is designed to help you focus your attention on your breath, which can be used as an anchor to bring your attention back to the present moment when your mind starts to wander.

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
3. Bring your attention to your breath and focus on the sensation of air moving in and out of your body.
4. If your mind starts to wander, simply acknowledge the thought and bring your focus back to your breath.
5. Continue to focus on your breath for 5-10 minutes, or as long as you feel comfortable.

## Exercise 2: Body Scan

This exercise is designed to help you develop awareness of the physical sensations in your body, which can help you to better recognize when you are experiencing stress and anxiety.

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
3. Starting at the top of your head, slowly scan down your body and bring your attention to any sensations you feel.
4. Notice any areas of tension, discomfort, or pain.
5. As you notice each sensation, take a deep breath and imagine the sensation melting away with each exhale.
6. Continue to scan your body, moving down to your face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, stomach, hips, legs, and feet.
7. When you reach the bottom of your feet, take a few deep breaths and then slowly open your eyes.

## Exercise 3: Noticing Sounds

This exercise involves focusing on sounds in your environment and observing them without judgment. It can help you train your attention and become more mindful of the present moment.

1. Find a quiet place where you can sit and focus on your surroundings without distractions. You can sit on a cushion or a chair, whichever is more comfortable for you.
2. Close your eyes or keep them open, whichever feels more natural.
3. Begin to focus on the sounds around you. Notice the sounds that are close to you, and then gradually shift your attention to sounds that are farther away.
4. Observe the sounds without trying to label or judge them. Simply notice the qualities of the sound, such as the volume, pitch, and rhythm.
5. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the sounds around you. It's normal for your mind to wander, so don't judge yourself if you get distracted.
6. Continue to focus on the sounds for 5-10 minutes, or as long as you feel comfortable.
7. When you're ready, take a few deep breaths and slowly open your eyes if they were closed.

Remember, attention training is a skill that takes practice, so don't worry if your mind wanders during the exercise. The key is to gently bring your attention back to the present moment whenever you notice your mind has wandered. Also, the information provided in this worksheet does not substitute medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.