



## MINDFUL WALKS

As we know, going for a walk can often help us to relax and unwind. The mental health benefits of going for a walk are endless – and going for a mindful walk can boost these effects even further!

Mindful walking comes from the Japanese practice of forest bathing. By immersing ourselves in nature, and mindfully using all of our senses, we can feel more grounded and connected to our bodies, leading to relaxation and general positive wellbeing.

When we walk mindfully, the journey is less about the destination or being on auto pilot. It's about being outside in nature and enjoying the here and now.

On the next page is a simple **'script'** to help guide you through the practice of mindful walking.

Feel free to take it out with you or take a picture of it on your phone. Once you've done it once, you'll be able to get into the swing of things!

Remember, there's no one correct way to walk mindfully  
**- the goal is to be present.**

### BEFORE YOU WALK:

- Find somewhere safe to walk where you won't be disturbed. Some ideas include:
  - Your garden
  - A park
  - Country lane
  - Busy street
- Wear comfortable clothing and good shoes
- Stand still and become aware how you feel
  - Ask yourself how you're feeling today
  - How does your body feel?
- Notice the weight of your body, the feeling of your feet in your shoes, the feeling of your muscles as you balance yourself
- Take a few deep breaths and bring yourself into the present

## AS YOU START:

- Start walking, a little slower than normal
- Walk as mindfully as you can
- Keep awareness of:
  - Each footstep as it rolls from heel to toe – how does it feel?
  - The way your feet and legs feel as you flex those muscles
  - The movement of your body – what are your arms doing, how do they feel?
  - Do you need to open your hands slightly more?
  - Does your back feel tense?
- Pay attention to your senses as you walk:
  - What can you hear?
  - What can you smell?
  - What can you feel?
  - What can you see?

- Be aware of your breathing – breathe easily but deeply
- If you find your mind drifting from walking and breathing, gently guide your thoughts back
  - Acknowledge each thought as it comes up, but gently tell yourself to park it for now – you can always revisit it later
- Continue walking for as long as you feel safe and comfortable

## TO FINISH:

- When you feel ready to come to an end, stop and stand still
- Take a few deep breaths
- You are now ready to finish

