

ONE STONE

A Mindfulness Exercise to Reduce Overwhelm and Improve Focus

Mindfulness is the act of bringing yourself into the present moment and accepting that moment completely as it is – without judgment.

Practicing Mindfulness in little ways every day has been shown to Reduce Rumination, Lower Stress, Boost Working Memory, Increase Focus, Lower Blood Pressure, Promote Better Sleep, Lessen Emotional Reactivity, Increase Cognitive Flexibility and Improve Relationships.

Cool, right?

One Stone is a mindfulness technique that I learned from friend and colleague Millie Grenough of Oasis in the Overwhelm – Mil learned it directly from Vietnamese monk and Zen Master, Tich Nhat Hanh. I hope you'll give it a try.

The beauty of the one stone is that it's simple. It only takes a moment, and the more often you do it the greater the benefit – the greater your power for focus becomes.

I recommend at least 10 times a day to start (don't stress – it , and then as often as you think of it or whenever you need a moment's pause or focus.

Begin with a stone in hand. (If you don't have a stone, you can hold anything you find pleasant to look at – I have a client who uses her wedding band because it's always with her.)

Now take a deep, cleansing breath.

For this technique you will pay attention to the stone in your hand (eyes open) for the time it takes you to take about 10 deep breaths. No need to count your breaths – whatever feels like about 10 will do.

As you're looking at your stone, let your mind explore it. Focus on it. What does it feel like, look like? What color is it? What do you notice about it? Keep your attention on the stone.

As other thoughts or sensations arise and pull your attention away, (and they will) simply notice them – whatever they are, without judging them or yourself – and make your very next thought about the stone.

That's it.

You've begun a mindfulness practice.

It's important to remember, the more you practice directing your attention to what you choose when things are relatively normal, the better you'll get at doing it when things get crazy!