

Getting curious about itches..

We all get itches – and without thinking we just scratch them. The next time you notice you have an itch, you could try something different – and instead of scratching it, see what it's like to just notice how it feels..

Of course you can choose to scratch it whenever you want to, but why not see what happens if you don't just react, but take the time to get curious about it? You might notice it changing, maybe going away, maybe getting stronger, maybe moving around – whatever.

This is called 'refraining', and practising on itches or other small annoyances makes it easier to refrain from the big things – like urges and cravings to use or drink. This is just one example of a really simple technique from mindfulness helping with addiction – why not try it?!

"It is never too late to turn on the light. Your ability to break an unhealthy habit or turn off an old tape doesn't depend on how long it has been running; a shift in perspective doesn't depend on how long you've held on to the old view.

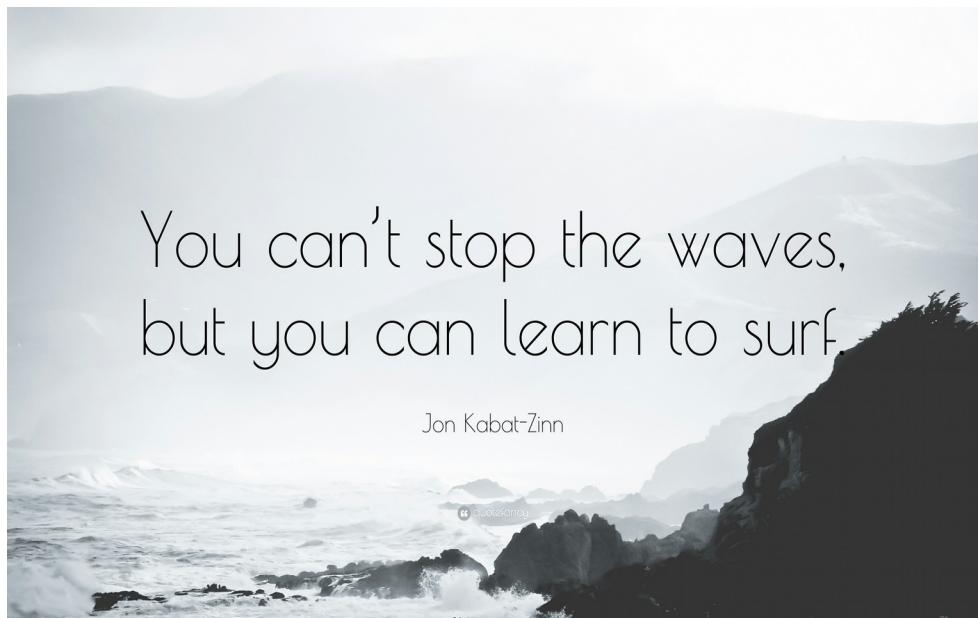
When you flip the switch in that attic, it doesn't matter whether it's been dark for ten minutes, ten years or ten decades.

The light still illuminates the room and banishes the murkiness, letting you see the things you couldn't see before.

It's never too late to take a moment to look."

Sharon Salzberg

Mindfulness in Early Addiction Recovery



You can't stop the waves,
but you can learn to surf.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is something that we all already do at times - it's not anything exotic or difficult, and practising it regularly can have surprisingly powerful effects.

“Mindfulness is the aware, balanced acceptance of the present experience. It isn’t more complicated than that.”

(Sylvia Boorstein)

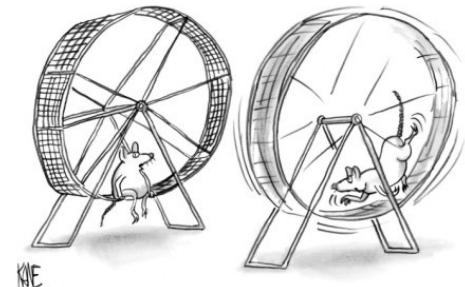
It is an ancient practice which has been around for 2,500 years or longer, with its goal to help people overcome suffering. It comes from ancient spiritual practices, but this mindfulness programme is not religious in any way, and is based on programmes used in mental health services in the NHS.

Why do it?

As humans, we often spend our time thinking about bad times from the past, good times we've lost, and regrets – and worrying about the future. Sometimes we need to think our way through problems, but often it's unhelpful and we find we're going over the same old ground again and again, all the while getting more wound up or depressed.

Over time, if we practise bringing the attention back from our thoughts to the present moment – e.g. to the breath coming in and out of the body, or sounds around us, or the feel of soap suds while washing up - we find an inner emotional strength that helps us feel more calm and in control. If we practise regularly we find we become more mindful day-to-day, and this helps us to know ourselves better. We find out we are not defined by our thoughts and feelings but are bigger than them.

Mindfulness has helped many people with their recoveries and there is plenty of evidence to show it works, but the most important thing is what YOU notice when you do it regularly.



“I had an epiphany.”

So it's important to keep an open mind, and meet it with curiosity. If you're unsure it will help you, join the club! No-one ever started mindfulness knowing it would work for them – but trust the process, give it a go, and see what happens.

People have said the following about this mindfulness programme:

I relaxed without realising I was relaxing!

Now I can stop to smell the roses.

I can handle things so much better.

Things pass! Mindfulness has been so massive for me.

When/where/who with: