



# Mindful USC & The Kortschak Center

## Doing Mindful Studying Independently



### Taking Mindful Breaks: Check-in with your biological needs *first*

**HALT**

**1-3 MIN**

Often, when we find that we're upset or in distress, we forget to take care of our most basic needs. This exercise provides a way of tending to immediate needs in a way that can allow us to take beneficial action right now. If you find that you're in distress, ask yourself, am I:

**Hungry?** – If yes, have a snack or, if it's time, eat a meal. Being hungry affects our moods and ability to concentrate in the moment.

**Angry?** – If yes, simply acknowledging that we're feeling anger can help to take the steam out of it, and can help us make better, less spontaneous decisions in the moment.



**Lonely?** – If yes, reach out to a trusted friend or family member. Even if you're not feeling lonely, connecting with others can help us manage our worries and struggles.

**Tired?** – If yes, rest, take a short nap, or, if the time is right, get a full night's sleep. Being tired makes it difficult to make good decisions and causes us to be less resilient in the face of stress.





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### Taking Mindful Breaks: Moving with Compassion

#### 1. Beginning to Move

Stand up and feel the soles of your feet on the floor. Rocking forward and backward a little, and side to side. Making little circles with your knees, feeling the changes of sensation in the soles of your feet. Anchoring your awareness in your feet.

#### 2. Opening

Now opening your field of awareness and scanning your whole body for other sensations, noticing any areas of ease as well as areas of tension.

#### 3. Responding Compassionately

Focusing for a moment on places of discomfort.

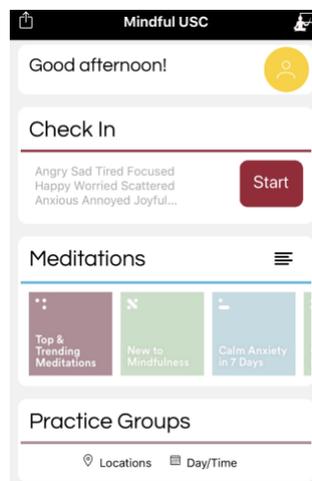
Gradually begin to move your body in a way that feels really good to you—giving yourself compassion. For example, letting yourself gently twist your shoulders, rolling your head, turning at the waist, dropping into a forward bend...whatever feels just right for you right now.

#### 4. Stillness

Finally, coming to stillness, standing again and feeling your body, noting any changes.

### Try a meditation on the Mindful USC App

iPhone



Android



Find us at [mindful.usc.edu](http://mindful.usc.edu)  
<https://kortschakcenter.usc.edu>



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### The Pomodoro Technique

**Pomodoro** is the Italian word for tomato. The inventor named the technique after a tomato-shaped timer he used to track his work.

**1.**  
Identify task



**2.**  
Set timer for 25 minutes



**3.**  
Work on task  
(with no distractions)



**4.**  
End work when timer rings and mark task as done



**5.**  
Take a 5 minute break, then move on to next task



**6.**  
After four sprints, take a longer break (15–30 minutes), then start again



Pomodoro 1

Pomodoro 2

Pomodoro 3

Pomodoro 4

Break :)



<https://www.microsoftpartnercommunity.com/t5/Blog-Discussions/Work-smarter-not-harder-The-Pomodoro-Technique/td-p/2828>