



PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Mindfulness techniques help us become more resilient to life's challenges. Amy Roberts, LCSW and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher at RBOI, says that developing a non-judgmental, beginner's mind is key. "Be aware of your reactions, your thoughts, your body, but in a way that's patient and trusting," she explains. "Don't judge your reactions as right or wrong, or good or bad, but have a childlike curiosity about your feelings, emotions, or responses. It's really extending a kindness inward, but also to those around you."

She points to studies showing that mindfulness improves memory and concentration. Mindfulness can also decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, while improving quality of life and one's ability to cope.

Roberts offers free Friday meditation sessions on Zoom. To learn more about mindfulness programs

at RBOI, call her at 352-732-0277. You can also access meditation videos at any time on RBOI's guided meditation page, RBOI.com, under the "Cancer Support" tab.

Come Meditate with Us!

Roberts leads Tuesday meditations noon-1PM, free to any current and former RBOI patient and to any Marion County resident 55 and older. RBOI and Healthy55.org offer this program at One Health Center, 1714 SW 17th Street, Ocala, FL 34471. To sign up, phone or email Brenda Williams at 352-812-2059 or bwilliams@onehealthcenter.com.



Take a Rest STOP

How do you create internal peace amidst disruption? Roberts recommends the **STOP** technique.

S MEANS STOP. Pause whatever you're doing. It may help to picture a big STOP sign in your head.

T means Take a big, slow breath. Fill your lower and middle belly, widen your chest up to the top, and then reverse that flow down to the belly button. Take those breaths for however long you need to.

O MEANS OBSERVE. "We're observing without judging ourselves," Roberts says. "With a sense of kindness, the way you would with a friend. What's going on right now? Am I hungry? Am I tired? What do I need?"

P MEANS PERCEIVE whatever you need in that moment. Maybe you need to say, "I'll get back to you tomorrow" or take a brief walk outside. For some people, prayer provides a sense of stillness.

The **STOP** technique is an internal exercise. "It's something you can do when something is really triggering you," Roberts explains. "Nobody has to know what you're doing, but you can do it quietly for yourself. And the more times you use it, the more it becomes the default."

by the numbers

More than
75%
People who use meditation for health reasons

4x
Meditation was shown to be four times more effective in reducing blood pressure compared to health education

More than
14%
Americans who have meditated at least once

6 months
Neurological improvements have been found in older adults who received 6 months of mindfulness training, compared to those who did not.

Giving Thanks

Having a gratitude practice can lift you out of a dark place. "Gratitude doesn't mean ignoring what is difficult," Roberts says. "Life is tough, but a gratitude practice helps to balance the heaviness of managing a crisis. You're not just your disease. Other things in your life have value or purpose and can give you some sense of joy or safety."

The practice can include a gratitude journal. "Every morning or evening, write down a few things that happened or that you have that day that you're grateful for," Roberts says. It can be something simple like, "I love my hair color today," or, "I have a roof over my head." Think about why you are grateful and what those things mean to you."

Don't worry if you skip a day or a week, Roberts advises. Just start again. "Patience and empathy are key."



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