



Virtual Participation Guide

Welcome

All of us at The Centre for Mindfulness Studies want to welcome you, and to thank you for your hard and loving work to raise funds for our Community Program, to bring mindfulness and mental health to marginalized people.

Together, we are making a positive difference in the lives of those facing tremendous difficulty, people who are without the resources and supports enjoyed by most Canadians today.

Please take a few moments to stop, relax and open fully to present moment experience.

Lucy White
Tita Angangco
Dr. Patricia Rockman
Laurie Arron
Karen Sutherland

On behalf of The Centre for Mindfulness Studies
Fundraising Committee



What you'll need

- A good internet connection and screen - either your computer, TV or projection screen, large enough for you and everyone participating at your location to see it well. See below for video streaming instructions.
- Something to sit on - chair or floor sitting cushion, and a yoga mat.
- A prepared cold lunch - eating lunch is part of the program, and the program will flow continuously into and out of lunch, with no break for food preparation or warming.
 - We invite you to practice kindness by choosing a lunch that does not harm animals or the planet.

Schedule - Sunday, October 15

10:00 am	Make sure you've got everything you need, including lunch and a connection to the video streaming
10:25 am	Settle in, start streaming, and get ready for the program to begin at 10:30.
10:30 am	Program begins with our Orientation
11:00 am	Meditate-athon begins <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Mindfulness Practice Guidelines below
3:00 pm	Meditate-athon ends Thank-you's and prizes Streaming ends

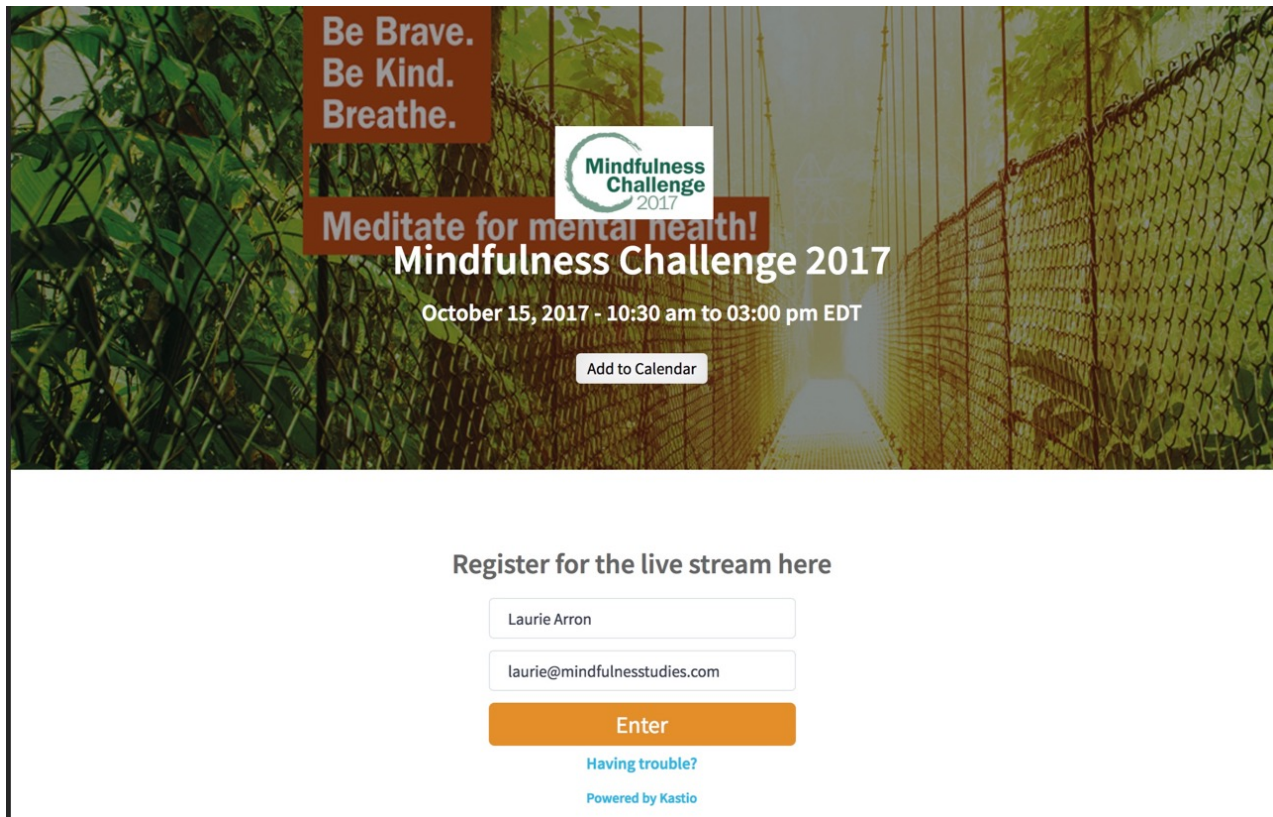
Video Streaming

Please test the video streaming in advance. Here's how.

1. Using any web browser, use the following link to the video streaming:

<https://kastio.com/mindfulness-challenge-2017>

2. When you go to this url, you will see the following screen.

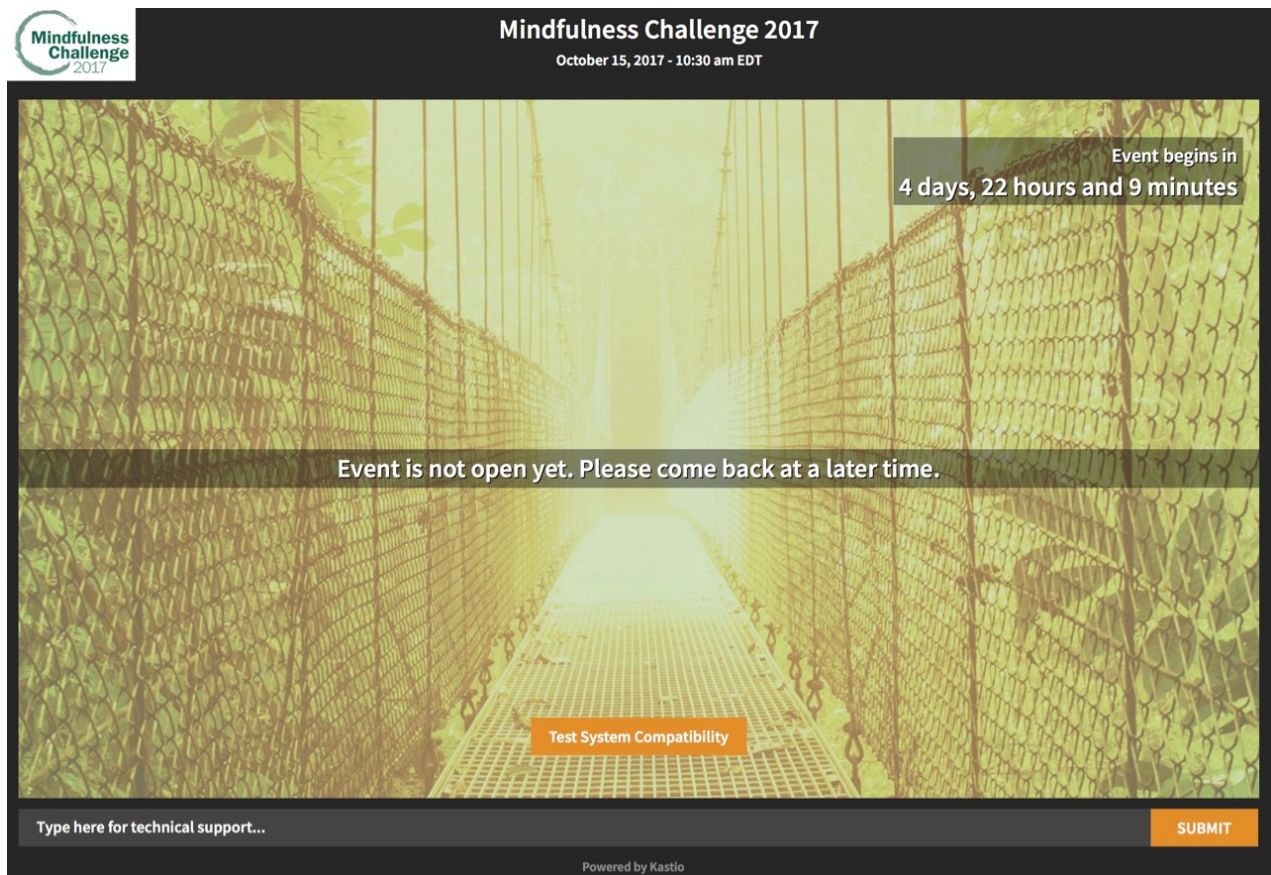


If you have any trouble, click the [Having trouble?](#) link to connect to a live chat, starting around 30 minutes before the event begins.

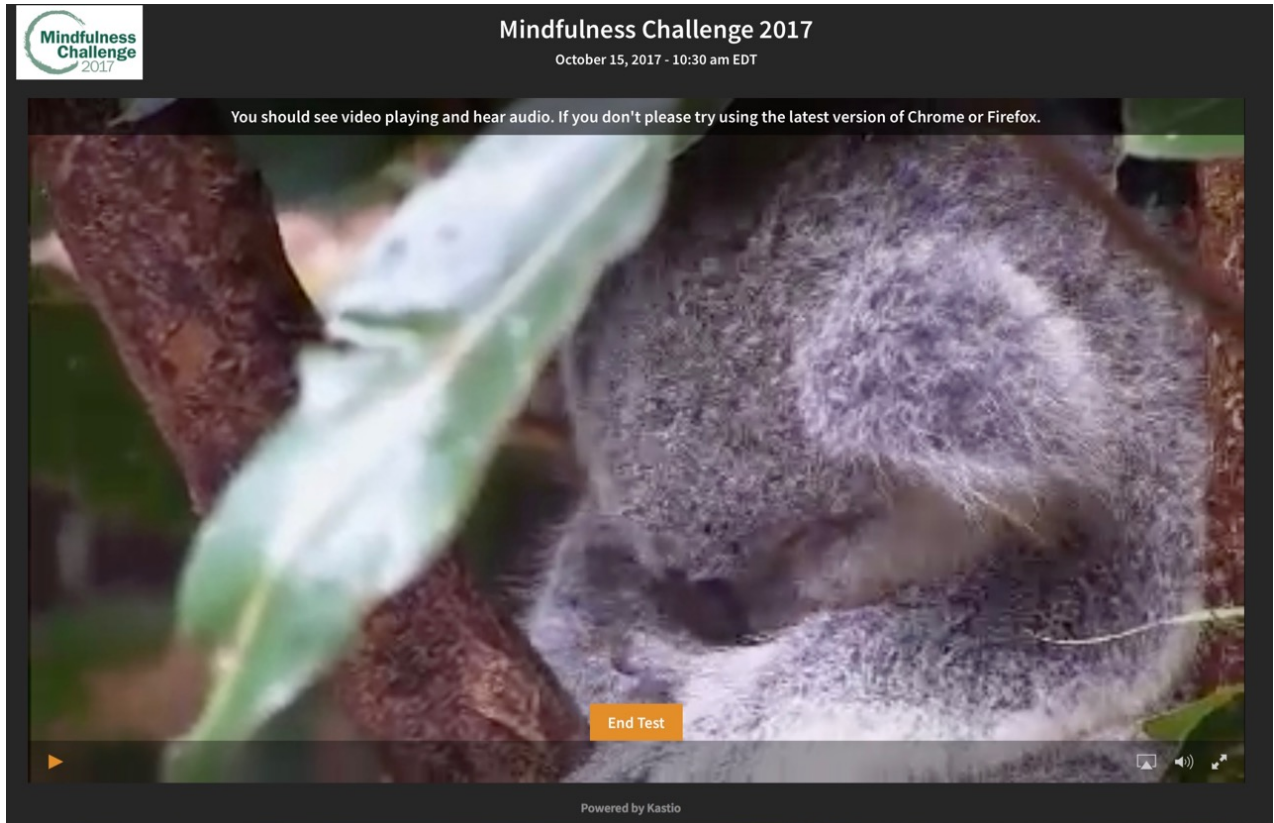
3. Enter your name and email to "register". When you do this, you will be connected to the event stream.

Until the streaming starts at 10:30 am on October 15, you'll see the following screen. You will also be emailed a link to go directly to this screen at a later time.

If you have any trouble on event day, use the live chat function at the bottom of the page, by typing where it says "Type here for technical support" and clicking the orange Submit button. Live chat will be enabled about 30 minutes before the event begins.



4. Click the orange "Test System Compatibility" button near the bottom to make sure the streaming is compatible with your computer. It will then play a video and you will see something like the following screen.



You should see video playing and hear audio. If you don't please try using the latest version of Chrome or Firefox. On event day, you can use the live chat function to ask for help, starting about 30 minutes before the event begins.

At the bottom of this screen are these controls. **If you can't see them, try scrolling down.**

- on the left: a play / pause button
- on the right:
 - an Airplay icon (Apple devices only)
 - a volume control icon
 - a full-screen icon

Click the End Test button to end the test.

5. If you're planning to use a TV or projection screen, make sure those work as well.

Mindfulness Practice Guidelines

SILENCE

We ask you to maintain silence throughout the program, wherever you are, even when going to the washroom. Maintaining silence allows our minds to settle and become clear, to be in deeper contact with ourselves and those around us.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Challenge offers a refreshing opportunity to take a break from our cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices. If you do need to use them, please be kind and find a place where other participants cannot hear you.

MAKE EVERYTHING A MEDITATION

Mindfulness meditation isn't just about sitting. You can make any activity a meditation simply by practising present-moment awareness, bringing your attention to your breath, body, or mind.

Throughout the meditate-athon, try to maintain a continuity of present-moment awareness. Inevitably, your mind will wander. No problem! When you notice your mind has wandered, you have moved from autopilot to mindfulness. Now gently bring your attention back to the present moment.

Meditation does not mean your mind is still. It simply means you are practising mindfulness, regardless of how active your mind is. It is the act of repeatedly bringing attention back to the present moment that builds your mindfulness muscles.

NO SET BREAKS

To support you to maintain continuity of your mindfulness practice, there will be no set breaks.

You are free to go to the washroom or otherwise take care of yourself as you see fit. We encourage you to maintain your mindfulness by being aware of your steps, your breath, and your bodily sensations.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Please take good care of yourself. During the yoga or mindful movement, you may not be able to do exactly what others are doing. Be kind to yourself by moving in a way that's right for you, regardless of the guidance. This is a safe space to be yourself.

During meditation, in fact at all times, you are free to change positions, stand or lie down. You may also leave the room, but do your best to maintain present-moment awareness.

Before moving, we invite you to take a moment to check in with yourself. Notice what is going on in your body and mind and see if you are able to explore the physical or mental discomfort. There is a fine line between avoidance and self care. Sometimes intentional avoidance is the right thing, but often if you lean in, just a bit, you may gain insight into your suffering, and perhaps a bit of freedom!

Participate as a Group

For a fun and powerful experience, we highly recommend you participate as a group, rather than alone. Two is good, three is better, and more is great!

It's important to participate as a group so you have a strong mindfulness "container." When we say container, we mean an environment that makes it easy to practice mindfulness. If you've meditated alone and in groups before, you know how much easier it is to practice in a group. We recommend a group because:

- You'll have people to share the experience with - before, during and after
- There will be at least one partner / small group exercise
- With others there:
 - You won't talk
 - If you start thinking about something, you won't get up and do it.
 - You won't lie down and go to sleep
 - You'll be more focused
- There's a group energy that you can tap into. It's like when you walk into a room of very tense people, you can feel the tension. Same with anger. Same with happiness. And same with mindfulness and concentration.
- Who wants to sit alone for 4 hours?

Feel free to invite people to join you, even if they're not registered for the Challenge.

While the Mindfulness Challenge 2017 program is designed for everyone, it really is better to have at least one experienced meditator in the room to "hold the space." So if none of you has ever meditated before, try and find an experienced meditator to be there with you. If not, no problem!

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to whatever is happening in our lives, inside and out, in the present moment.

We become less likely to get carried away, and more aware of habitual patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour.

With mindfulness, we train ourselves to pay close attention to what is going on in the present moment; just as it is. Much of our suffering is a result of regrets about the past, worries about the future or judgments about the present. When we are mindful we become aware of and explore these habitual thought patterns and ways of reacting. This attitude of curiosity allows us to create new and healthier ways of responding to life's challenges.

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

Proven benefits include:

- Stress reduction
- Reduced rumination
- Decreased negative mood
- Less emotional reactivity/more effective emotion regulation
- Increased focus
- More cognitive flexibility
- Improved working memory

WHAT IF I CAN'T STOP MY THINKING?

This is the biggest misperception people have about mindfulness practice. You do not need to stop your thinking!

Mindfulness is about awareness, not stopping our thinking. Being mindful means we are aware of the fact we are thinking, rather than being on autopilot.

What is Kindness?

Kindness is the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness, ideally with no strings attached. Like a muscle, kindness can be trained. As Samuel Johnson said, *"Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not."*

Some people say it's not mindfulness without kindness! Bringing kindness to your mindfulness practice is important in working with challenges and unpleasant experience. You can bring kindness to an experience simply by allowing yourself to open as fully as you can to whatever is going on. When you open to an experience, you see it more clearly, and can gain freedom in choosing how to respond.

Studies show "that kindness (along with emotional stability) is the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in a marriage. Kindness makes each partner feel cared for, understood, and validated—feel loved... there's a great deal of evidence showing the more someone receives or witnesses kindness, the more they will be kind themselves, which leads to upward spirals of love and generosity in a relationship." (The Atlantic)

LEARN MORE: mindfulnessstudies.com/mindfulness/

Teachers

We have an amazing group of teachers leading the day. To see their bios, go to The Event page and scroll to the bottom.

<https://mindfulness.akaraisin.com/common/Event/AboutUs.aspx?seid=14265&mid=58>

The Community Program

The Centre for Mindfulness Studies is committed to making mindfulness available to everyone. This is at the heart of the work we do. With more than 20 social service agencies and seven healthcare partners, we are a charity bringing mindfulness-based therapy into communities across Toronto and beyond. We offer personal programs to the public, and are the leading provider of professional mindfulness training in Canada.

Whether it's depression, anxiety or other mental health challenges, there are many barriers to care, including the lack of available treatment resources, an intervention model predicated on formal medical diagnosis and the cost of treatment from psychologists.

Our Community Program removes these barriers by delivering mindfulness programs to these marginalized groups and training the frontline workers who serve them, as well as peer leaders, so that mindfulness can be sustainably infused into social service agencies.

Our bursary program helps those who cannot afford to pay the full fee for our personal therapy programs.



Thanks to Our Sponsors!



Thanks to Our Community Partners!



Special Thanks to

- 
- A background image showing a person in a meditative pose, overlaid with a grid pattern. The image is used as a backdrop for the list of acknowledgments.
- David's Tea
 - Daniel Kharlas
 - Earth & City Catering
 - Flow Water
 - Fresh Restaurants
 - Giddy YoYo
 - Gisele Theriault
 - Halfmoon Yoga Products
 - Heather Rea
 - iGita Yoga Studio
 - Julie Jarvis
 - Kristen Sanders
 - Kupfert & Kim
 - Lisa Duranleau
 - Lolë
 - MamaEarth Organics
 - Patricia Savage
 - Rejuvenating Spring
 - Snow Lion Meditation Shop
 - Sounds True
 - Sugar Ridge Retreat Centre
 - Taste of Nature
 - Victoria Dawn

More info: <http://www.mindfulnesschallenge.ca/>