



# 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.



## 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 snack – mindful eating is part of the program, and the program will flow continuously into and out of the snack, with no break for food preparation or warming. We invite you to practice kindness by choosing a snack that does not harm animals or the planet.

## Schedule - Saturday, November 9

11:30 am	Make sure you've got everything you need, including a snack and a connection to the video streaming
11:50 am	Settle in, start streaming, and get ready for the program to begin at noon
Noon	Meditate-athon begins <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mindfulness Practice Guidelines below</li></ul>
4:00 pm	Meditate-athon ends Thank-you's and prizes
4:15 pm	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-2019>

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



## Register for the live stream here

[Having trouble?](#)

Powered by Kastio

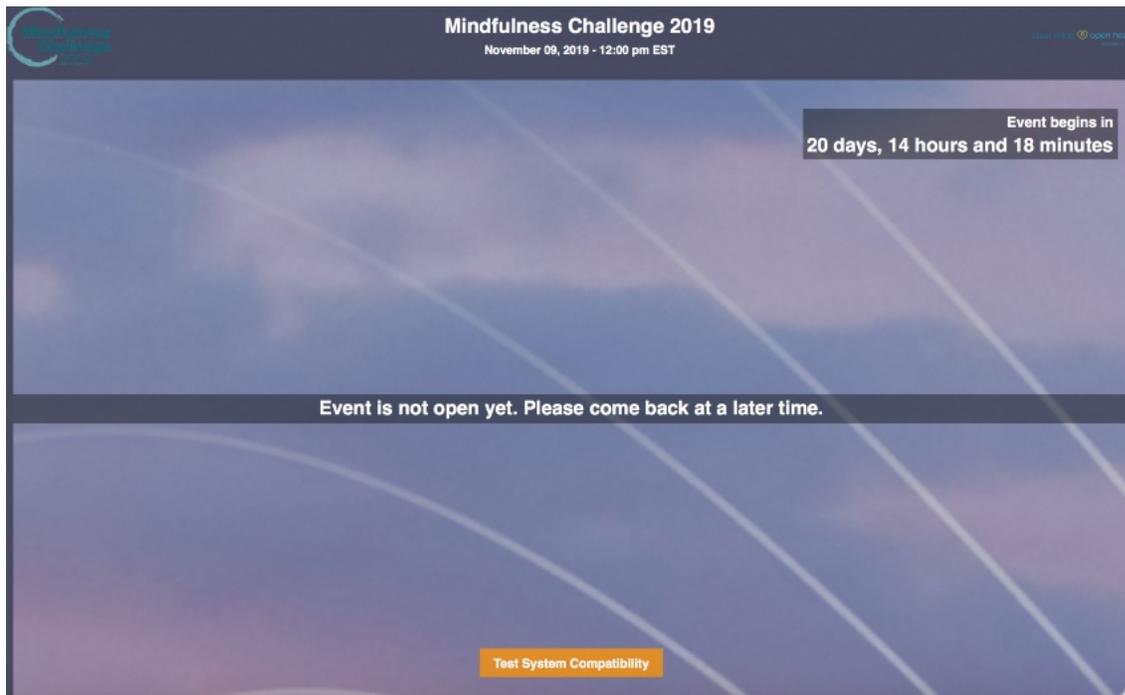
---

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

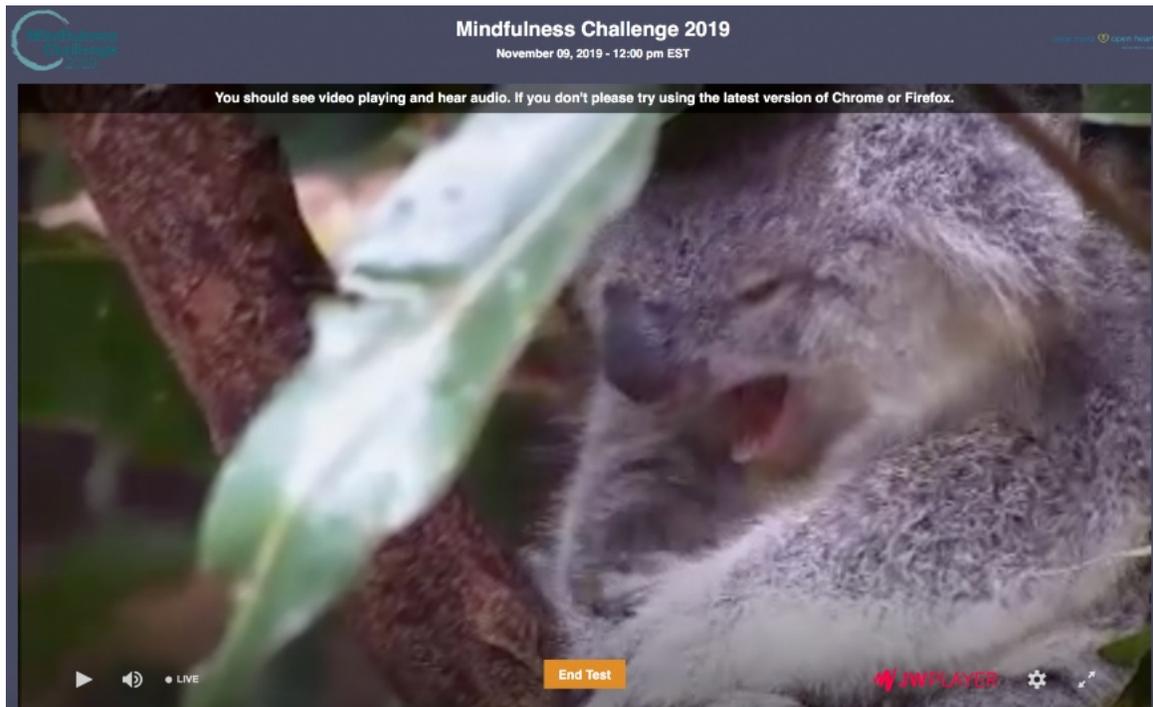
3. Enter your name and email to "register", i.e. check in. When you do this, you will be connected to the event stream.

Until the streaming starts at 11:50 am on November 9, 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 may have to click the play button.



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 11:30 am Toronto time, 20 minutes before streaming starts.

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 help you 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 is 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 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 does "Clear Mind, Open Heart" mean?

### Clear Mind

A clear mind is a way of being with the movement of thoughts, emotions and body sensations with kindness, awareness, and curiosity. Sometimes it is called simply mindfulness. A clear mind leads to understanding and wisdom.

### Open Heart

An open heart is one that can hold our own suffering, and the suffering of others, with openness, compassion and love. Love that comes from deep within and has the capacity to include everyone. According to [Rick Hanson, Ph.D.](#):

*When your heart is open, what's that feel like? Physically, in your chest – like warmth and relaxation — and in your body altogether. Emotionally – such as empathy, compassion, and an even keel. Mentally — like keeping things in perspective, and wishing others well.*

*Feel the strength being openhearted, wholehearted. Be not afraid, and be of good heart. Paradoxically, the most open person in a relationship is usually the strongest one.*

*Get a sense of your heart being expansive and inclusive, like the sky. The sky stays open to all clouds, and it isn't harmed by even the stormiest ones. Keeping your heart open makes it harder for others to upset you.*

*Notice that an open heart still allows for clarity about what works for you and what doesn't, as well as firmness, boundaries, and straight talk. Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama are famous for keeping their hearts open while also being very effective.*

### Two Wings

A clear mind and an open heart are like two wings of a great bird. Tara Brach describes the practice of meditation as having two wings: "recognizing, so that you actually see what is happening in the present moment, and allowing, where whatever is seen is held with kindness — seeing what's here and regarding it with tenderness. [Saying yes.](#)" Recognizing is mindfulness and allowing is an open heart.

**LEARN MORE:** [mindfulnessstudies.com/mindfulness/](https://mindfulnessstudies.com/mindfulness/)

## Teachers

The day will be led by mindfulness teacher trainer extraordinaire Susan Woods and movement guru Roberta Mohler. See the [Program page](#) for more details.

## 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 40 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. Our Community Program removes these barriers by delivering mindfulness programs to 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!



Intelligent Change



hoame



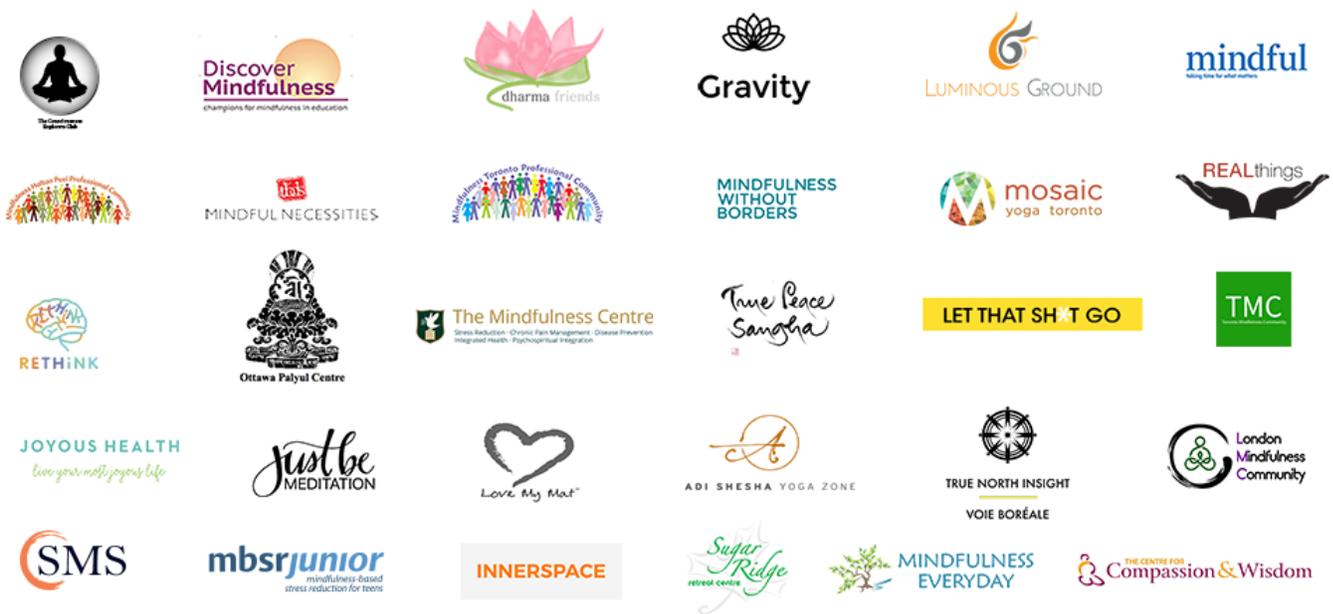
a mindful  
society



The Quiet Company



## Thanks to Our Community Partners!



## Special Thanks to

- Adishesha Yoga Zone
- Press Printing
- Earth+City
- Float Toronto
- Greenhouse Juice
- Halfmoon Yoga Products
- Kupfert & Kim
- MamaEarth Organics
- Made Good Bar
- New Harbinger Publications
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Sunshine Montessori School
- Sugar Ridge Retreat Centre
- The Global Classroom

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