

## **Off the Mat: Living Yoga in Daily Life**

### Week Two: Integrating Mindfulness Practices

1. **Mindful cooking.** Prepare a healthy, delicious meal with gratitude for all the people who had a part in bringing the food to your table: the farmers, the workers, the truck drivers, the grocery store workers. As you cook, infuse the meal with the intention that it provides nourishment and energy to those who eat it.
2. **Mindful eating.** Set your table nicely, maybe with a candle and a cloth napkin. Sit comfortably. Eat your meal slowly, paying attention to how each bit of food tastes. Notice when you have eaten “just enough,” and stop eating when you have.
3. **Mindful walking.** Go on a quiet walk by yourself. Pay attention to the colors you see, how the air feels on your skin, your breath. Notice what’s happening in nature this time of year. When you walk past homes, send loving-kindness and good intentions to the people inside.
4. **Mindful listening.** Really listen to a loved one speaking, without attending to another task, pushing the conversation, or waiting for your turn to talk. Think of the Chinese character for listening: at the top are the signs for ear and eye; the sign for undivided attention sits in the middle; and it’s all held at the bottom by the symbol for heart.
5. **Mindful commuting.** If you normally listen to the radio or the news on your daily commute, try doing it in quiet one morning per week.
6. **Mindful resting.** This is not the same as sleeping, or turning off the mind by watching TV. Take time before bed to deeply relax. Get very comfortable in a chair, couch or in a Restorative yoga pose. Slow down your breathing. Listen to a guided relaxation as an aid.
7. **Mindful enjoying.** Practice savoring! A glass of good wine, a hot bath, a massage, music you love, an art exhibit, a cashmere sweater, gourmet food - anything special to you. Take time to notice how it looks, feels, tastes, smells and feels
8. **Mindful housekeeping.** Choose a household chore such as folding laundry, washing dishes, or sweeping the floors. Next time you do it, bring your full attention to it. Appreciate how this simple task is part of maintaining a clean and healthy home, a necessary foundation for the rest of your endeavors.
9. **Mindful decorating.** Spend a weekend decluttering your home of things, so that it is easier to keep tidy, and the things you own are useful and beautiful to you.
10. **Mindful scheduling.** Be a little less busy. Make fewer commitments. Protect some unscheduled time each week. If possible, keep one whole day uncommitted. If not possible, try for a half-day, or even just a few hours.