**Mindfulness**

When was the last time you paid attention to your walking? To your food? To your breath? Mindfulness has gained attention over the years to manage stress and balance overall wellbeing.

However, being “present” can be more difficult than it sounds. Often, we are planning for our future or focusing on our past. The present moment is the only moment within our control. Here are some ideas to bring more mindfulness into your day-to-day.

**Use your senses**

Take a moment and notice the smell and sounds of your environment without judgement. Notice how your body feels; are you cold or warm? Do you feel relaxed or tense? Simply acknowledging your current environment through your senses can bring you to the present moment.

**Positive thinking**

When you are feeling happiness, joy and gratitude take a moment to savor it. Bring your attention to your breath to become more present in the positive feelings and positive thoughts.

**Mindful eating**

Eating mindfully is a powerful way to practice being present. Take your time to just eat – avoid distractions like the television or cellphones. With each bite of food bring awareness to the taste and temperature. While looking at your plate notice the different colors and types of food you are about to consume. Allow yourself more time to chew and savor your food.

**Mindful movement**

When you are exercising, honor your body’s capabilities in that moment. Some days you will be able to push your body further than others but do not judge yourself if your body is telling you to ease up. Notice any intense feelings (anger, frustration, sadness) you may experience, acknowledge them, then focus your attention back to your movement. Remember your body’s current state is impermanent so progress through your workouts with patience.

**Mindful sleep**

It is time sleep is thought of as a necessity, not a luxury. Your habits before bed and during your day can impact your sleep. If you have trouble falling asleep consider meditating or practicing mindful breathing before bed by following your breath in and out. Notice your thoughts and feelings as you are getting ready for bed. Do you feel chaotic? Rushed? Stressed? Consider implementing a more relaxing bedtime routine.
There are many ways to bring mindfulness into your lifestyle. Setting small goals to gradually incorporate mindfulness into your life is an effective way for changing your behavior. What area of mindfulness do you want to concentrate on? Think of one small change you can make to begin your journey of being more mindful. Ask yourself “How would my life be different if I was more present throughout my day-to-day? Remember, mindfulness is a practice—be patient with yourself and remember to breathe!

For information on mindfulness visit www.pebtf.org, click the “Get Healthy” logo and select “MyActiveHealth”.