

## **Self-Guided Mindfulness Walk**

Trail Lake Park - 605 Ravenna Rd, Streetsboro OH 44241  
Osprey Loop

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present and aware of where we are and what we are doing in the moment. On this walk, you are invited to immerse yourself in nature in a mindful way, using your senses to derive a whole range of benefits for your physical, mental emotional, and social health. Being mindful in nature is an effective tool to overcome the ill effects of a hectic life and its associated stress. It enables the stressed portions of your brain to relax. Nature has a positive effect on our mind as well as our body. It improves heart and lung health, and is known to increase focus, concentration, and memory.

If this is your first experience practicing mindfulness in nature, please be patient with yourself. If you notice your mind wandering away from the present moment, simply pause your walk and use this breathing technique to recenter your focus. First, exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound. Close your mouth and inhale slowly through your nose to a mental count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 7. Exhale completely through your mouth to a count of 8. Let's practice! Focus on your breathing: inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8.

Please enjoy experiencing nature around you with awareness. There are 4 numbered markers along the paved Osprey Loop Trail. You can stop at each marker to practice a different mindfulness exercise. Move at your own pace, enjoying and focusing on the natural wonders around you. If your mind moves away from the nature surrounding you, pause and use the inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8 breathing technique to refocus.

Before you enter the trail and begin your walk, please take a few minutes to bring attention to your body. Relax the tension and stress you may be carrying by mentally scanning your body from your feet to the crown of your head. Notice your feet and wiggle your toes if you are able. Move your attention slowly up your body, acknowledging your legs, waist and chest as you go. Slowly inhale deeply and notice your lungs expanding as they fill with air. Exhale slowly and acknowledge the sensation of them emptying. Place your hand over your heart. Feel your heart pumping energy and life through your body. Drop your hand and relax your arms at your side. If you are able, spread your fingers wide and wiggle them. Acknowledge your arms as you move your attention up to your shoulders and neck. If you are able, slowly rotate your head to the left and to the right, then gently bend your head from side to side; left ear to left shoulder, then right ear to right shoulder. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Open and close your eyelids. Acknowledge your head and the beautiful mind within.

Follow the paved Osprey Loop to the right. Notice the sky, the sounds, and the colors around you as you walk.

1 - The bench invites you rest, but you are welcome to stay standing. Look toward Trail Lake. Gaze across the meadow and let your eyes find the water. Notice its color, its movement, its connection to the land. Now look for a tree that captures your attention. Slowly trace the outline of the tree with your eyes, starting from one edge at the base of the trunk. Move your gaze up, around, and down the other side of the tree, covering all the minute details that define the boundary of the tree. If you find your mind wandering or racing, bring it back to the outline of the tree and slowly complete your tree tracing.

Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 7 counts, exhale 8 counts. As you continue your walk along the trail to the second station, focus your attention from the larger objects and landscape to the tiny world of insects, seeds, or leaf details along the trail.

2 - Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and wait to feel grounded. Focus on your sense of hearing. Notice the sounds of nature near and far, the silence in-between the sounds, and the entire soundscape. Are birds singing? Are trees rustling? When you are ready to open your eyes, open them slowly and notice everything around you. Continue your walk along the trail and pay close attention to all of the sounds of nature as you go.

3 - Tune into your sense of touch. Notice the texture and qualities of the air on your exposed skin. If you are able, spread your fingers and feel the air between them. Feel the breeze upon your skin. If you so choose, place your hands on the ground or against a tree. Notice the texture, temperature, and energy on your hands. Connect with the forest. Connect with the earth. Inhale 4 counts, hold for 7 counts, exhale 8 counts. As you continue your walk along the trail to the last station, acknowledge the feeling of coolness and warmth as you move from the shade to the sun. Notice the feeling of the air as you change speed. You may choose to rest on a bench next to the water.

4 - Step just off the paved trail. Look out across Trail Lake. Now, focus your attention on the ground beneath your feet. Mentally create a tiny circle of awareness around you. Become aware of all the beauty in the tiny circle. Slowly expand the circle of awareness to include a larger area. Notice all of nature's gifts within this larger circle. Continue to expand your circle of awareness until it includes the full view of the lake or until you reach the edge of your imagination. Take your time. When you are finished, inhale 4 counts, hold for 7 counts, exhale 8 counts.

As you complete your walk along Osprey Loop, focus on your breathing.

Inhale gratitude.

Exhale peace.