

**THE
PMDD
PROJECT**

MINDFULNESS & PMDD

When PMDD takes over, it can feel like you're losing control of your mind and body. The emotional storms, intrusive thoughts, and intense physical symptoms can make it hard to stay grounded. Mindfulness is a simple yet powerful tool that helps bring you back to the present moment, creating a sense of calm even during the most challenging times.

Mindfulness is about becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings without judgement.

With regular practice, you can learn to respond to PMDD symptoms with compassion and calmness, rather than feeling overwhelmed.

Here's how to start incorporating mindfulness into your daily routine:

Start with your breath

Your breath is always with you, making it one of the easiest and most effective tools for mindfulness. Focusing on your breathing can quickly calm your mind and bring you back to the present moment.



How to do it:

Take a **few deep breaths**, inhaling slowly through your nose for a count of four, holding for a count of four, and exhaling through your mouth for a count of four. Repeat this several times until you feel more centred.

Why it works:

Deep breathing activates your body's parasympathetic nervous system, which reduces stress and anxiety.

Body scan meditation

PMDD can make you feel disconnected from your body, or hyper-aware of uncomfortable symptoms like tension, pain, or fatigue. A body scan helps you gently check in with each part of your body, promoting relaxation and awareness.



How to do it:

Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Starting at your toes, move your attention up your body, noticing any sensations without judgement. If you notice tension or discomfort, take a deep breath and imagine releasing that tension with your exhale.

Why it works:

Body scans help you reconnect with your body and release physical tension that often accompanies PMDD.

Label your emotions

One of the hardest parts of PMDD is dealing with intense emotions that seem to come out of nowhere. Mindfulness encourages you to observe your emotions without getting swept away by them.



How to do it:

When you notice a strong emotion rising, take a moment to pause and label it.

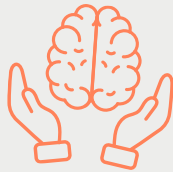
For example, you might say to yourself, “I’m feeling anxious” or “I’m feeling frustrated”. By acknowledging your emotions without judgement, you create distance from them, which can help you feel more in control.

Why it works:

Labelling your emotions helps you observe them from a distance, reducing their intensity and giving you the space to respond more calmly.

Practice mindful movement

Sometimes, sitting still isn’t what your body needs. Mindful movement practices, like yoga or walking meditation, combine mindfulness with gentle exercise, helping you stay grounded while moving.



How to do it:

For a walking meditation, go for a slow walk and focus on each step. Notice the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the movement of your legs, and the rhythm of your breath. If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to the present moment.

Why it works:

Moving mindfully helps relieve both physical and mental tension, offering a way to stay present and calm during PMDD flare-ups.

Mindful journaling

Writing can be a powerful way to process the emotions and physical turmoil of PMDD. Mindful journaling encourages you to reflect on your thoughts and feelings with kindness and curiosity.



How to do it:

Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to write freely. Don't worry about grammar or structure - just let your thoughts flow onto the page. You might write about your mood, symptoms, or anything that's on your mind. Focus on observing your thoughts without trying to fix them.

Why it works:

Journaling helps externalise your thoughts, giving you space to process emotions and gain perspective on your PMDD experience.

Mindful eating

PMDD can trigger cravings or make eating feel like a battle. Mindful eating allows you to slow down, enjoy your food, and tune into your body's needs.



How to do it:

When you eat, take a few deep breaths before starting. Pay attention to the colours, smells, and textures of your food. Chew slowly and savour each bite. Notice how your body feels as you eat, and stop when you feel satisfied, rather than full.

Why it works:

Mindful eating can help you make intentional food choices, reduce stress eating, and prevent feelings of guilt or discomfort after eating.

Be kind to yourself

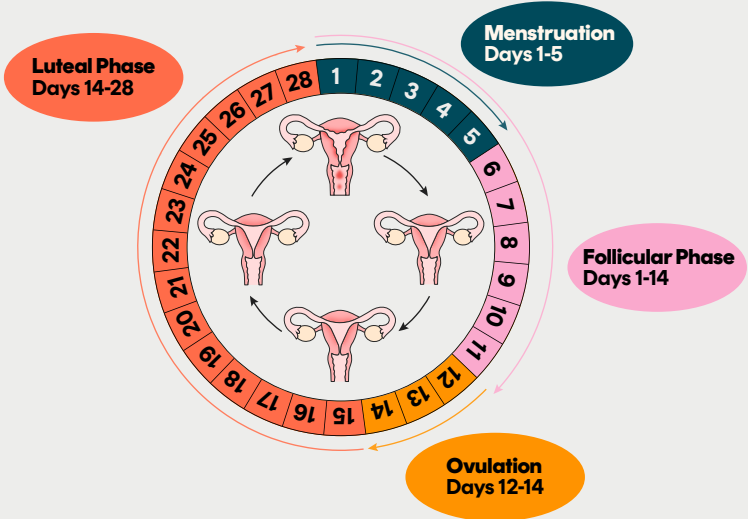
Mindfulness is not about perfection - it's about presence. When you're dealing with PMDD, some days will be harder than others, and that's okay. If you find it difficult to focus or feel overwhelmed, gently remind yourself that it's okay to pause and simply be with what you're experiencing.

Mindfulness is a practice, which means you don't have to get it "right" all the time. Just showing up for yourself, however imperfectly, is an act of self-compassion.

USING MINDFULNESS THROUGH YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

Your mood and energy levels shift throughout your menstrual cycle, and mindfulness can help you stay connected to yourself in each phase.

Here's how mindfulness can support you at different times:



Menstrual phase (days 1-5*):

As your period starts, you may feel more tired and inward-focused. This is a great time for restorative practices, like body scans or gentle breathing exercises, to help you connect with your body and allow for deep rest.

Follicular phase (days 6-14*):

With rising energy levels, try incorporating more active mindfulness practices, like mindful movement or walking meditation, to harness your renewed motivation and focus.

Ovulation phase (days 14-17*):

During ovulation, you might feel more social and outwardly focused. Use this time for mindful communication, whether it's deep listening in conversations or being fully present with loved ones.

Luteal phase (days 18-28*):

As PMDD symptoms intensify, mindfulness can help you navigate emotional storms. Labelling your emotions, practicing mindful breathing, or journaling during this phase can help you stay grounded.

Disclaimer: Everyone's menstrual cycle is unique, and not all cycles last exactly 28 days.

The information provided in this resource is meant to offer general guidance, but it's important to remember that your cycle length and phases may vary. Some cycles may be shorter or longer, and the intensity of symptoms and energy levels can differ from person to person. Always listen to your body and consult with a healthcare professional to tailor any advice to your individual needs.

Remember: Mindfulness doesn't take away PMDD, but it can help you navigate it with greater ease and self-compassion. By staying present and aware, you can give yourself the gift of space, allowing you to respond to symptoms rather than being swept away by them. Over time, mindfulness can help you build resilience and regain a sense of control over your mind and body.

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