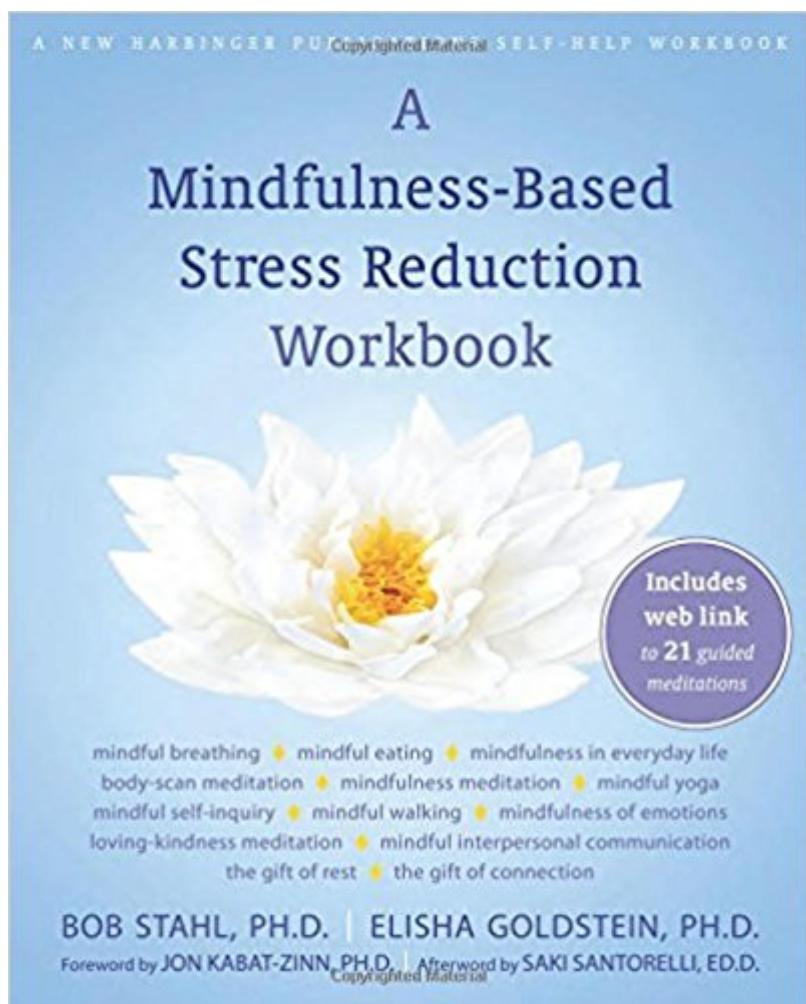


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# A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook



## Synopsis

Stress and pain are nearly unavoidable in our daily lives; they are part of the human condition. This stress can often leave us feeling irritable, tense, overwhelmed, and burned-out. The key to maintaining balance is responding to stress not with frustration and self-criticism, but with mindful, nonjudgmental awareness of our bodies and minds. Impossible? Actually, it's easier than it seems. In just weeks, you can learn mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), a clinically proven program developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Full Catastrophe Living*. MBSR is effective in alleviating stress, anxiety, panic, depression, chronic pain, and a wide range of medical conditions. Taught in classes and clinics worldwide, this powerful approach shows you how to focus on the present moment in order to permanently change the way you handle stress. As you work through *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*, you'll learn how to replace stress-promoting habits with mindful ones—a skill that will last a lifetime. This groundbreaking, proven-effective program will help you relieve the symptoms of stress and identify its causes so that you can start living a healthier, happier life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If I had to identify one quality that separates this book from the rest of the mindfulness resources in the self-help aisle, it's that these pages are so practical and can't help but provide the reader with plenty of "Aha!" moments. Reading through the chapters and exercises, I appreciate all the research that Goldstein and Stahl studied, material that illuminates how mindfulness exercises can alter and help shape your brain to be more optimistic and resilient. But what won my trust is that they have

both been stress cases themselves at certain points in their lives, and can therefore communicate with empathetic language. They both know, on a very personal level, how stress can disable a person. Much like Kay Redfield Jamison, the famous psychologist who suffers from bipolar disorder, they speak both as expert and patient. I understand mindfulness as forcing a bit of time and space between a situation and your reaction, or recognizing the snowball of thoughts that's forming in your mind before it becomes too overwhelming to sort through yourself. Goldstein and Stahl quote Viktor Frankl, psychiatrist and holocaust survivor: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." Although mindfulness techniques aren't able to rescue me out of an acute, severe depression, if I diligently adhered to all the wisdom contained in Stahl and Goldstein's book, and designated a time of the day to do all the exercises, I could save myself some considerable heartache and headache. Why?

I think I first became aware of "mindfulness" from one of the Star Wars movies. But it's played a central role in Buddhist meditation for a long time and is backed up by loads of research. The research per Wikipedia shows that a mere 6 weeks of mindfulness exercises is correlated with physical results such as the body's ability to fight disease. Mindfulness exercises seem to develop the brain's ability to deal with anxiety and stress. Once I understood this, it was easier for me to devote the time to the exercises in the book. I skipped a lot of days, which isn't good, but I was able to resume without difficulty. That made me appreciate that mindfulness is continuous, something that can potentially be practiced all the time. The exercises in this workbook put me to observing and recording my thoughts and feelings at critical times. One result of this is that experiences of certain routines changed, I believe. This puts me more in the present, which is not as simple as I had believed. For example, if you think about times of the day when you feel something is wrong and try to observe your thoughts and feelings at that time, recording them, you'll become aware of what really influences your physical response. I liked the formal practice log and found the informal practice reflection a bit difficult at the present time. Everybody will surely have their own experience. At least I have something to aim for ahead. Mindfulness teaches that thoughts and emotions float by, and realizing this will help us to not take our own thoughts too seriously. Reduction of physical responses to negative thinking is possible and this is what probably boosts the immune system per the research.

I've done some meditation as part of a yoga class and the instructor used mostly mystical-sounding

descriptions of what we were doing. On one hand I wanted to get into it, but the Western logic part of my brain wanted some science and statistics to back it up. It's hard to take some things seriously when there's so much disinformation on the web and elsewhere. This book takes a fairly neutral approach to mindfulness meditation. It doesn't immediately overwhelm you with happy-sounding terms or promise that it is "the way" to do something. Chapter 1 defines mindfulness and talks about habitual thinking patterns, which can be very destructive time wasters and lead to stress. The first formal practice involves eating a raisin mindfully, and there's a 3-minute check-in to help you get a better idea of how the practice works. There are two types of meditation: insight and concentration. This workbook focuses on mindfulness, which is a type of insight meditation. Basically, you focus on your body and feelings and observe what's going on at the moment without judgment, whereas concentration meditation involves mantras and imagery. I think insight meditation is a bit more approachable for most Westerners simply because there's no outward appearance of religion or doctrine associated with it. Essentially, it seems more mechanical and thus, scientific. The meditations are approachable and for most of them you don't need to do anything special. A short meditation can be done at your desk or simply seated on the sofa (with the TV off, of course!). Later chapters do get into meditation postures, including sitting poses and lying poses. Chapter 6 on "Deepening Your Practice" includes yoga-based stretches that will help relax your muscles.

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