

# Mindful hydration can reduce stress and boost productivity

**T**WO factors that impact our overall health are water and mental calm. Without water, our health is at risk. Without mental calm, our mental health is at risk.

If you're at work, stressed out and feeling the effects of dehydration, you are not going to be doing your best work. Your health, and your productivity will suffer.

This micro skill introduces a concept called mindful hydration – the daily practice of meditation while drinking water.

Here are some facts:

- The [Mayo Clinic](#) suggests that an acceptable target for a man is drinking around three litres of water a day, and a female, 2.5 litres.
- The [amount of water you need each day](#) is defined by additional variables such as exercise, body weight and temperature. You can use a [hydration calculator](#) to find out your minimal target.
- [Dehydration](#) can contribute to fatigue, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, digestion disorders, skin conditions, allergies and asthma.
- Science has found [meditation](#) slows brain activity processing, and the benefits of meditation are better focus, less anxiety, better sleep, memory, and reduced stress.

- A person needs only [10 minutes](#) a day of meditation to obtain many of these benefits.

This micro skill provides two benefits in one action called [Mindful Hydration](#). This skill was developed by Darren Steeves and myself. We are publishing the scientific evidence to show the positive impact on employees' [total health](#) and work force productivity.

## PREPARATION:

1. Self-evaluate your current situation. Are you having a hard time coping with life stress and demands? Complete the [Your Life at Work Survey](#), done by Howatt HR and The Globe and Mail, to get your baseline.
2. If you're motivated to find more calm and health, you're now ready to practice.
3. Try this daily for six weeks and then redo your survey to measure the impact.
4. Get a water bottle or glass you can use as your anchor for this activity.
5. Complete your water calculator to be clear on how much water you need a day to obtain the benefit. Measure your daily water intake to ensure you hit this number daily as well.

## 90-SECOND MINDFUL HYDRATION

Following is a mini version of the Mindful Hydration microskills program that has been adapted for this article.

**Instructions:** Read each section and follow the directions until you have the process memorized. The first two sections will take around 30 seconds; the practice session is 60 seconds.

1. **Create intention** — Decide that you want to take a mental break. Get up and find a safe place where you can pay no attention to other things and are 100 per cent safe. Get water in your bottle or glass (which is also your 'anchor'), sit, and get comfortable. Bring your attention inside and give yourself permission to take one minute for yourself. Take three deep breaths and exhale slowly for each breath to empty your lungs, and on the last breath put your hand on your bottle (your anchor).
2. **Clear your screen** — After your third breath, shift your gaze to the water. Notice the water. Examine it (e.g., how pure and clear it is, how calm it is).

This helps to prepare your mind for your practice. If your mind is jumping around throughout any step, it's okay. Be patient; this is normal. This step is to be used to transition your mind from the busy world to the now. Allow yourself to be present in the now moment.

3. **Practice** — It's now time to practice. Take the water to your mouth slowly and take a mouthful. Pay attention to the water and the space it fills in your mouth. Allow the water to go down your throat slowly. Notice the slow, clear, peaceful water falling down your throat with each drink. Between each mouthful, take a deep breath and exhale. Focus on the water. When your mind jumps around, simply refocus on this simple activity and notice the water — nothing more.

By simply practicing this 90-second mindful hydration activity — with intention — you have an opportunity to positively impact both your physical and mental health, one mouthful of water at a time. Once you master this microskill, each drink of water is a found opportunity.