Mindful Walks and Walking Meetings
Mindfulness Practice

- The purposeful attention of the mind, without judgment.

- A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.
Mindfulness Practice

- Being fully present and aware of this thing called life is mindfulness.

- Awareness of the people, places, and events, all is being mindful. It can be as simple as noticing the breeze that brushes your skin, the sun that beams on your skin, to the texture of the ground as you walk.

- Definitions: https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-mindfulness-definition/
Mindful Walks

- An active practice that requires you to be consciously aware and moving in the environment rather than sitting down with your eyes closed.
- The practice brings you closer to nature and your body. It also helps strengthen your concentration, makes you more aware, and connects you to the present moment.
Mindful Walks: Practice

- Begin by standing still and becoming aware of your body and how it feels. Notice your posture, feel the weight of your body pressing down toward the ground, and your heels pushing into your shoes; become aware of all the subtle movements that are keeping you balanced and upright.

- Allow your knees to bend very slightly and feel your hips as your center of gravity. Take a few deep belly breaths and bring your awareness into the present moment.

- Now begin to walk slightly slower than normal pace, maintaining an almost imperceptible bend in the knees. With each step, be aware of the gentle heel-to-toe rhythm as each foot makes contact with the ground.

- Breathe naturally and fully, deeply filling your lungs with each inhalation, but being careful not to strain or struggle in any way. Allow your eyes to focus softly ahead of you, taking in as much of the periphery as comfortable. Try to maintain a soft body and breathing awareness as you walk naturally and easily.

- When your attention drifts away from the sensations of walking and breathing, take notice of those thoughts, moods, or emotions without judgment and gently guide your awareness back to the present moment, back to the walking.

https://chopra.com/articles/mindful-walking-practice-how-to-get-started
Mindful Walks: Awareness

- Bring awareness to your surroundings:
  - Surfaces: grass, cement, bricks, slopes
  - Sounds: birds, people, leaves, branches, footsteps
  - Sensations: wind on hair, stride, clothes, posture, stress points
The hardest part of mindfulness is overthinking the process. If you start worrying whether you're mindful, or your focus begins to think about the past or the future, gently guide your mind back to being present in now and experiencing the ride, the sights and the surroundings off the moment.

The more you practice mindfulness, the easier it becomes to integrate into your daily routine.

Mindfulness and meditation are your exercise routines for the mind.
Walking Meditation: Greater Good in Action (UCB)

- Choose a location
- Start your steps
- The components of each step.
  - a) the lifting of one foot;
  - b) the moving of the foot a bit forward of where you’re standing;
  - c) the placing of the foot on the floor, heal first;
  - d) the shifting of the weight of the body onto the forward leg as the back heel lifts, while the toes of that foot remain touching the floor or the ground.
  - Then the cycle continues, as you:
    - a) lift your back foot totally off the ground;
    - b) observe the back foot as it swings forward and lowers;
    - c) observe the back foot as it makes contact with the ground, heel first;
    - d) feel the weight shift onto that foot as the body moves forward.

- Speed
- Attention to hands and arms
- Focus your attention
- What to do when your mind wanders.

https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/walking_meditation
Walking Meetings

- Walking constitutes the first part of the causal chain, signaling a chemical release in the brain that then triggers a boost in creative thinking.
- What this leads to is a greater recall once the participant stopped walking, with the average increase in creative output around 60 percent.
- Tips:
  - Consider including an “extracurricular” destination on your route. Set a halfway point.
  - Focus on using the walk for health benefits and work productivity. Goal should be meeting focused. Healthful snacks are secondary.
  - Remind the group that it will be a walking meeting. No surprises.
  - Stick to small groups.
  - Set a goal for the meeting; mini-agenda, talking points, discovery goals
  - Enjoy yourself; take a breath of fresh air.

https://hbr.org/2015/08/how-to-do-walking-meetings-right
https://www.business.com/articles/walking-meetings-are-your-new-creativity-booster/