

Sound mind & body



Sally Kellett ironing with her singing bowl. Picture: Ian Currie

MINDFULNESS ON THE RUN IS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR THOSE WHO CLAIM THEIR LIVES ARE TOO BUSY

CATHERINE LAMBERT

WHILE getting through our endless list of chores at home, the idea of centring our thoughts and practising a spot of mindfulness might not be high on the agenda.

As a focusing technique, it's often suggested that meditation or pausing to reassess is best practised 30 minutes once a day in a quiet, maybe even sacred location, seated in the lotus position.

But there's an alternative for over achievers – mindfulness on the run, more important than ever as we return our lives to a new normal, according to meditation expert Sally Kellett.

Ms Kellett says it takes much less time than the traditional approach of sitting, turning attention inward to breathing and practising meditation.

Centering on the positive and on goals as we move forward will be a critical tool in adjusting, she says. "It's a complete myth that you need to be surrounded by fluffy cushions and sparkling crystals in order to practise mindfulness," Ms Kellett says.

"In fact, some of the best times are when you're stuck in traffic or doing the dishes. Another myth is that, unfortunately, a lot of busy people immediately say they don't have time. I say that it actually means being aware of your mind, body and speech. You can't tell me that you don't have time to be aware of that. You don't even need time to be aware. Mindfulness does not mean meditation. It's a way of life."

The key is that it can be performed anywhere, anytime. Doing the ironing, driving the car, having a shower, ironing or cleaning the house are perfect locations for mindfulness. It can just take a moment to become aware of your thoughts, actions and speech — the essence of mindfulness.

In this context, the 'mind' is the centre of thoughts, the 'body' is our actions and 'speech' is about being conscious of what we say. Gossip or betraying a confidence is negative speech but speaking words of truth and sincerity is positive speech.

It's reminiscent of Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*, suggesting people focus on the task at hand rather than rushing into emotions, thoughts and fears. For example, when doing the dishes Ms Kellett suggests honing your focus on that task alone because, by holding a single point of focus, other thoughts melt away giving the mind a refreshing break.

"As humans, we're very good at being stuck in autopilot," she says.

"If you have to make 100 decisions a day, your brain is already on autopilot but if instead you're taking care and attention to what you're thinking in your mind, saying with your mouth and doing with your body, you're being fully aware

and awake. That's mindfulness on the run."

One of the greatest opportunities to practise is in difficult times such as a bad meeting, a sense of impatience or when someone gets angry with you, hurting your feelings.

"If you're really stressed, your tension is high and that's when you can dedicate some time to take a break and actually set your intention to do just that," she says.

"It doesn't mean sitting there humming a mantra. You can follow through with your intention while you're washing the dishes as long as you put on the phone and just focus on scrubbing those dishes."

Your Peace Within Yoga and Well Being owner Kimberley Roberts has long been committed to yoga and mindfulness as a way of life, not just a momentary discipline.

"The idea is to bring what we practise on the mat into everything we do and the effects of that can be really profound," Ms Roberts says.

"Eating, cooking or anything really simple are opportunities to practise. I've witnessed myself rushing or stressing out to get to a meditation practice when I realise that it's not really the point."

In her courses she delves into the various ways that awareness



Mind over matters

- 1 Start by paying more attention to when your anger and frustration is arising – this should be the alarm bell to practise mindfulness on the run asap. Once you feel yourself getting agitated, that should signal that you need to pause.
- 2 Set a clear intention of using that time (washing dishes, driving to work etc) to clear your mind and focus on the task and live in the present.
- 3 Commitment is key – during the exercise, commit to not looking at your phone, not getting attached and going down the rabbit hole with your thoughts. Focus on the task at hand.
- 4 Challenge yourself to make every opportunity one for practice – even while reading this, your mind has probably already wandered 30 per cent of the time already as that is the human default.
- 5 Choose an activity that you will dedicate to your practice and do that activity every day.

can have an impact on our nervous system. Sleep, mental clarity and emotional balance can all be affected by bringing more awareness into every moment.

"When you're getting very stressed stop, take a breath and decide to cancel a commitment that may be stopping you from being present in your life," she says. "It's like anything – if you stand with terrible posture but then do yoga once a week, it won't impact your life. We need to bring what we're practising on the mat or the meditation cushion into our lives."

A yoga teacher of 30 years, she explains most mindfulness practice start with body awareness because that is the best way to become present, to feel what is happening immediately.

"A lot of people talk about going on holidays as the time they can relax but we can look out the window, look on the grass, look at the clouds and let the mind wander. That's when we have that sense of being spacious and gain more insight," Ms Roberts says.