



A new Meditation Suite at  
Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

# Make Way for Mindfulness

How to practice it every day,  
with help from spa and wellness  
retreats, to online programs

By **Liz Robins**

Being consumed by thoughts isn't a condition unique to our current high-tech, always-on way of life; it's an occupational hazard of being human. We may not be able to halt the storm of thoughts in our heads, but we need not allow it to rule our lives, either. By enhancing present-moment awareness, mindfulness can help us observe our thoughts without judgment and appreciate the now, resulting in stress relief, greater contentment and self-awareness, more harmonious relationships and better health.

*“Life does not  
consist mainly, or  
even largely, of facts  
or happenings. It  
consists mainly of  
the storm of thoughts  
that is forever  
flowing through  
one’s head.”*

—Mark Twain

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## Great Mindfulness Resources

### Chopra Center Online Programs

Access enlightening, multi-session online courses including Primordial Sound Meditation, Basics of Meditation and more taught by Deepak Chopra and other well-known mind-body experts. [chopra.com/online-programs](http://chopra.com/online-programs)

### Dr. Dan Siegel

The website of this world-renowned mindfulness expert and author offers info about his myriad books (*Mindsight* and *The Whole-Brain Child* are two of the most popular), upcoming speaking engagements, Mindsight Immersion Weekends in Santa Monica, a blog and other excellent resources. [drdansiegel.com](http://drdansiegel.com)

### Felix Lopez

In his book *Mindfulness: The Alchemy of Now* (Merry Dissonance Press), spiritual leader Felix Lopez draws examples and analogies from everyday life to explain mindfulness in simple, practical terms. Lopez invites readers to connect to their full potential and live consciously by focusing awareness on the present moment. [felixlopez.org](http://felixlopez.org)

### 1 Giant Mind

Anyone can meditate with this free app, thanks to its simplicity, intuitive interface and limited time requirement (a mere 15 minutes a day during the 12-step introduction). Brief, helpful videos and written content enhance the experience. [1giantmind.org](http://1giantmind.org)

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The Labyrinth at Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

The recent surge of interest in mindfulness has resulted in countless resources for those wanting to practice it, from meditation courses and apps to books and expanded wellness-retreat offerings. Here is a sampling of some of the best.

## Spa and Wellness Retreats

Three stunning Meditation Suites at **Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat** ([gwinganna.com](http://gwinganna.com)) were added to the Australian property's range of accommodations earlier this year and designed to promote mindfulness, meditation and yoga among guests lucky enough to book the popular suites.

In recent years, guests at Gwinganna have reported increased stress levels and expressed growing interest in meditation, according to Gwinganna General Manager Sharon Kolkka. "Meditation and mindfulness practice is a way of finding stillness in a busy, technologically advanced world," she says.

Filled with natural light and neutral tones, each of the airy, open-plan suites includes a deep bath, king-size bed, private deck with day bed, laundry facilities and amenities including a meditation cushion, yoga mat and iPod loaded with music and meditation sessions—an ideal way to sample various techniques to find one that resonates. Cushy armchairs provide a comfortable perch for those who prefer back support while meditating. The suites also offer peace, privacy, a soothing billabong backdrop and even the occasional wallaby sighting.

Mindfulness is central to this sprawling, eco-certified retreat in the lush, southeast Queensland hinterland. Its secluded hilltop location provides welcome distance from everyday distractions, and you won't find TVs, newspapers or broadband Internet access to hinder you from staying present and savoring your experience. (Mobile phone use is limited to guests' rooms and one common area.) Delicious organic cuisine is prepared utilizing herbs and produce from the on-site gardens and nearby farms.

The exceptional treatments at Gwinganna's award-winning spa—from heavenly massages and Aboriginal-inspired body rituals to chakra balancing with Ayurveda aromatherapy—clear the way for mindfulness by dissolving stress and rebalancing body and mind. Meditation options for guests include morning Qigong, the labyrinth walk (referred to as walking meditation), a private meditation session with a skilled practitioner, and Equine Assisted Meditation (working one-on-one with a horse, assisted and supervised by a trained therapist). Gwinganna programs with a special focus on mindfulness include the three-night Time Out Weekend and the four-night Nourishing You and Triple S (Sugar, Sleep, Stress) programs, but all programs incorporate some elements of mindfulness.

Mindfulness-enhancing programs abound in the U.S., as well. **The Chopra Center at Omni La Costa Resort and Spa** ([chopra.com](http://chopra.com)) in Carlsbad, CA, hosts its Signature Meditation and Yoga Retreat (Seduction of Spirit: I Am the Creator of My Best Life) July 10–16 with Deepak Chopra and world-renowned life coach Martha Beck. The retreat gives participants a break from the distractions of daily life to gain clarity about who they truly are and their life's purpose through yoga, meditation and the Seven Spiritual Laws of Success. Another option is the center's six-day Perfect Health Workshop, available throughout the year to nourish body and mind through meditation, daily Ayurvedic spa treatments, a gentle cleanse and consultation with mind-body medical physicians. Daily drop-in yoga and meditations classes are also held at the center.

**The Oaks at Ojai** ([oaksspa.com](http://oaksspa.com)) Mindful Meditation Weekends, offered twice a year, are ideal for those with limited time. Two of the spa's yoga teachers lead the program, which kicks off on Friday evening and includes intention setting, several meditation sessions, relaxing yoga and Qigong. Meditation is also available a few times per week as part of the regular fitness schedule at The Oaks, and as part of the Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi & Qigong theme weeks offered twice a year.

**The Omega Institute for Holistic Studies** presents several mindfulness courses ([eomega.org/mindfulness/workshops](http://eomega.org/mindfulness/workshops)) at its Rhinebeck, NY, campus this year, from The Mindful Educator for teachers to Mindfulness at Work. Omega is also hosting an event in New York City on December 9 titled Intimacy With Awareness: The Healing & Transformative Potential of Mindfulness with Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, best-selling author and founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction ([eomega.org/visit-us/omega-nyc](http://eomega.org/visit-us/omega-nyc)). The event takes place in a single evening, but the benefits are sure to extend well beyond into your daily, more mindful life.

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## Mindful Eating: Coconut Lime Bites

makes 24



Recipe from Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups desiccated coconut
- 1 cup raw cashews
- pinch of sea salt
- 3 limes, juice and zest
- 2 tablespoons raw honey

Blend coconut, cashews and salt in a food processor for three minutes. Add lime juice, zest and honey, and process, scraping down sides as needed. Process until mix comes together and forms a dough like ball. Roll into walnut sized balls. Store in refrigerator, but take out 10 minutes before serving.

**NOTE:** These can be rolled in desiccated coconut. You can substitute maple syrup for honey if needed.



For more recipes for optimal wellness visit [ospa.me/mindful-recipes](http://ospa.me/mindful-recipes)