

# A beginner's guide to colour walks

Boost your mental and physical health with this mindfulness practice

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A young woman enjoying a walk, listening to music and smiling at her surroundings

What is a colour walk and how to take one?

If you've been on mental health TikTok recently, you may have come across creators sharing their experiences taking a colour walk.

The concept is quite simple – you choose one colour to focus on while taking your walk and try to notice as many things that include that colour as you go along. For example, if you choose the colour purple you may notice a purple flower, someone's lavender-coloured scarf, some dark-purple berries on a tree, and some purple lettering on a store sign.

Paying attention to one colour helps to focus your attention and practice mindfulness during your stroll. It also helps you to appreciate your surroundings in a new way, since we often go into autopilot in areas we are familiar with. Plus, it's a practice you can do whether you're in an urban or rural area – cities are full of colours, but so are forests and fields.

Some people choose to take photos of all of the items of their chosen colour that they come across along the way, but that isn't necessary. In fact, using your phone may distract you from enjoying the process itself.

This would also be a great activity to keep kids engaged – plus there is zero preparation time or extra materials needed.

## Mental and physical health benefits of colour walks

Colour walks combine the health benefits of walking with the mental health benefits of mindfulness practices.

According to [Harvard Health](#) and the [Mayo Clinic](#) walking helps:

- Boost immune system.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Improve cardiovascular health.
- Strengthens muscles and bones.
- Improves energy levels.
- Improves memory, sleep, cognition, and mental health.

- Reduces stress and tension.

According to the [University of California-Davis](#), mindfulness practices help to:

- Lower blood pressure.
- Improve sleep.
- Decrease depression and anxiety.
- Improve attention and memory.
- Enhance motivation.
- Increase compassion for others.

## The research on practices like colour walks

Colour walks incorporate several therapeutic strategies including mindfulness meditation, bilateral brain stimulation, and colour therapy. Understanding how these strategies affect our brains can help us to better understand how colour walks can strengthen our capacity for stress management, focus our attention, and influence our mood.

## Mindfulness meditation

The [American Psychological Association](#) defines mindfulness as “as a moment-to-moment awareness of one’s experience without judgment”.

Mindfulness meditation is the practice of self-regulation, where the person seeks to gain better control over their attention and awareness levels. Greater control over these processes can be beneficial in emotional regulation, managing stress, and focusing on the tasks in front of us versus ruminating.

There are several ways you can do mindfulness meditation, whether through a guided meditation on an app, in a psychotherapy setting with a trained therapist, during a yoga session, or by incorporating a mindfulness practice into your everyday activities – like your walk!

Practitioners are often asked to pay attention to what they are feeling and noticing in the present moment – for example, their breath, bodily sensations, and thoughts –and this is key– without trying to change or control them.

[Studies have shown](#) that practicing mindfulness strengthens areas of the brain associated with attention and emotional regulation, and those who practice mindfulness have a decreased response to stress.

## Bilateral eye movement

Bilateral stimulation occurs when both the left and right sides of our brains are stimulated at the same time. This can happen through a number of methods.

In [EMDR therapy](#) for trauma and PTSD, patients are often guided through a series of bilateral eye movements; the patient follows the therapist’s moving finger from side to side which helps to activate both sides of the brain. This bilateral activation helps our brains process difficult emotions and experiences more easily.

However, bilateral stimulation can also happen when we are doing other activities such as taking a walk. Think about it... Walking naturally forces us to move both sides of our bodies and thus, activates both sides of our brains. We also naturally scan our environment from side to side while walking – further reinforcing the bilateral stimulation effect.

Why is bilateral stimulation beneficial? Stimulating both sides of our brain helps to calm our amygdala – the part of our brain that gets activated when we are in fight or flight mode. Bilateral stimulation helps to calm us down and manage our stress levels.

## Colour therapy

Colour therapy is considered an alternative medicine and isn’t meant to replace traditional treatments for mental health conditions. However, you may have noticed that the colour of light blue can evoke a feeling of calmness, or that greens can feel healing. Many people notice how the colours we surround ourselves with can impact our mood and even our energy levels.

When planning a colour walk, you might ask yourself what you’d like to feel afterwards? Calm? Energized? Creative? Then think about what colour you associate with that feeling. Try focusing on that colour on your colour walk and see how it makes you feel.

## Colour walk variations to try

If you find you’re enjoying colour walks but are looking to switch things up a bit, you may want to try some of the following colour walk variations. Sometimes changing our routine can help us to challenge our brains

in new ways – further strengthening the benefits of our mindfulness practices.

### Rainbow walk

In this variation, instead of choosing one colour to focus on, try to spot all of the colours of the rainbow. Start with one colour and once you've spotted something, move on to the next colour until you've gone through the whole rainbow.

### Follow the colour

Many people take their usual route when doing a colour walk, but you can also switch things up by allowing the colour to choose your path. Whether you will turn left or right will depend on which side you spot the colour.

This method encourages you to take an extra step in letting go of your expectations and plans. Make sure you plan extra time for making your way back home, as you'll likely be taken off of your usual course.

### Seasonal changes

When the seasons change, we are treated to a whole new range of colours outside.

Choose a seasonal colour like pink in the spring or orange in the fall – focusing on these new colours can help us to better appreciate the natural changes of the seasons.

### Random colour

Pick a colour at random instead of choosing one yourself. This forces you to let go of control and really pay attention to your surroundings – you may notice things you hadn't before.

### Scavenger hunt

Make it a game! This variation would be fun to try with kids. Make a checklist of items to find along the way, for example:

- A yellow plant.
- Something blue that isn't the sky or water.
- A red item that is moving.
- Something purple that is smaller than a sheet of paper.

### Closing thoughts

Colour walks are a simple way to add a new mindfulness practice to your regular walks. By pairing mindfulness meditation with walking, you get two-in-one benefits for your mental and physical health. Try one of the colour walk variations to challenge your brain in a new way. Enjoy!

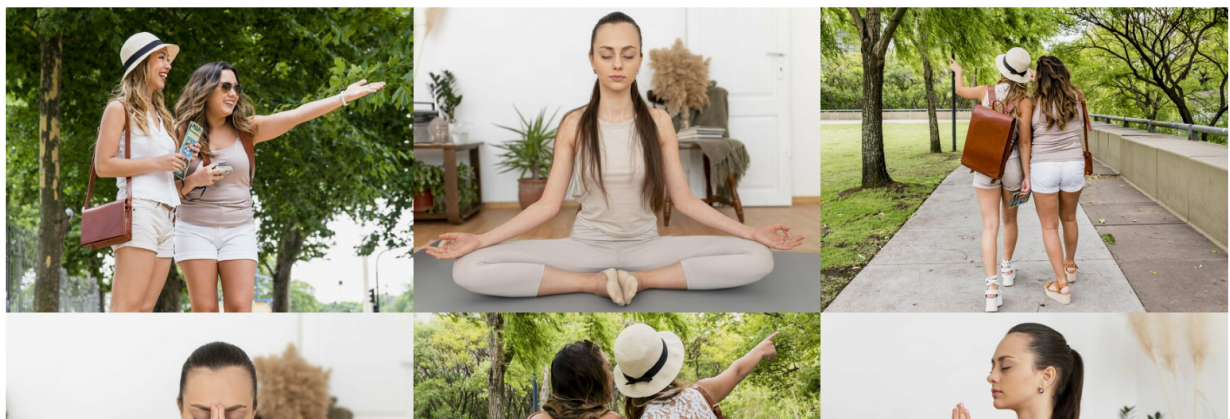
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Lindsay Meister is a Canadian copywriter and content writer. She blends her social work background with her professional writing training to craft strategic content with a personal touch; helping clients nourish their audiences with fresh, relatable, and goal-driven copy. When not writing, Lindsay enjoys getting crafty, trying new recipes, and running around after her two charming yet cheeky orange tabbies.

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1. Two friends during a color walk through a vibrant, green-filled park gesturing toward something in the distance, combining the physical benefits of walking with the calming practice of mindfulness
2. A woman sits serenely in a cross-legged position on a yoga mat, her hands resting gently on her knees, palms facing upward, and her eyes closed, practicing mindfulness meditation
3. Two women stroll through a tree-lined urban park, one pointing toward a distant sight, fully immersed in their walk, capturing the essence of a color walk, a mindfulness practice where participants choose a single color to focus on, such as green in this lush setting, and consciously notice it in their surroundings
4. A woman sits peacefully, hands pressed together in a prayer pose, eyes closed in reflection—a moment of mindfulness that fosters emotional balance, stress reduction, and a stronger connection to the present
5. Two women stroll through a tree-lined urban park pointing at different objects along their walk, completely focused on their journey together and appreciating their surroundings
6. With her hands in a prayer pose and eyes closed, a woman embraces a moment of mindfulness, cultivating calm, focus, and inner peace

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