

Mindful about Time in a Fast Forward World. The Effects of Mindfulness Exercise on Time Perception

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Abstract

Considering the increasingly fast-paced and more hectic ways of living in most of the developed countries, finding the factors that can be manipulated or the techniques that can be used in order to slow down the speed of perceived time can represent a mean to gain a better sense of control over our life. The goal of the present study was to investigate the impact of mindfulness practice, with varying degrees of external stimulation, on time perception. An important finding of this study is the fact that mindfulness practice had a significant effect, $F(1, 79) = 20.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.08$, on the perceived speed with which time passes. Participants in the mindfulness group perceived time as having passed more slowly than participants in the control group, indicating that an awareness of our present experience, on a moment-to-moment basis, may impact the way we perceive the passage of time. Our findings provide significant empirical support for the ability of mindfulness meditation to slow down our perception of time passage. One practical implication of this finding is that mindfulness techniques could potentially help us gain a better sense of control over our increasingly faster and more hectic lives.

Keywords

time perception, mindfulness meditation, subjective passage of time judgments, interval length estimation.