



Mindfulness

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L and Julie Eller
Guest Speakers: Dr. Nicole Reilly and Meryl Arnet

Living with arthritis can lead to major stress. Which can lead to more pain! It's a vicious cycle that can leave you mentally and physically exhausted. Research suggests that mindfulness practices can help people living with chronic pain. But the idea of even practicing mindfulness and meditation to break that pain chain can be scary.

In this episode, originally released in December 2019, Rebecca and Julie learn how stress impacts our bodies and our brains. They explore simple ways to introduce mindfulness into arthritis care management.

Dr. Nicole Reilly helps us understand how our bodies respond to pain and what we can do to break the cycle. She's an integrative medicine physician who specializes in chronic pain.

So what does making mindfulness a part of your life look like?

Yoga and meditation guru Meryl Arnett teaches us a technique to get started. Introduce compassion and self-care into your day, one minute at a time.

Settle back and [tune in!](#)

Related Resources:

- [Types of Meditation for Arthritis](#)
- [How to Meditate for Arthritis](#)
- [Guided Imagery for Arthritis](#)



Episode 44 Mindfulness for Beginners

Re-released 10/5/2021

Thanks for joining us on the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast. While we take the time to regroup here at the pod with Julie's departure, we thought we'd throw back over the next month to some of our favorite episodes that have been popular with our listeners.

Since we just talked about Mindful Movement using tai chi and yoga in the last two episodes, I thought we'd go way back to our second episode on Mindfulness for Beginners. This was the only episode we were able to record with our guest in the studio, Meryl Arnett, in Atlanta. It was also one of Julie and my favorite episodes; we've referred back to it many times. Not to mention that it was one of the best cups of tea I have ever had. So if you haven't listened to this episode yet, I highly recommend it. This is one of the practices I've tried to incorporate into my routines that has truly helped with my stress and anxiety levels.

If you've already listened, maybe you weren't sold on it or haven't found a way to get started. Here's the first step. Do yourself a favor and just try it for a couple weeks and see how you feel after. Mindfulness can do the body and mind so good. I know I need this right now in my life, so I hope it can help you, too.

This episode was originally released December 9, 2019.

- Rebecca: [00:00](#) Thanks for joining the Live Yes! With Arthritis Podcast. I'm your host Rebecca. I'm an Occupational Therapist living with rheumatoid arthritis.
- Julie: [00:09](#) And I'm Julie, a juvenile arthritis patient, and tireless advocate, and we're bringing you a series of conversations with experts about hot topics in the arthritis community.



- Rebecca: [00:19](#) Today we're looking at what people with arthritis should know about the relationship between arthritis and stress.
- Julie: [00:26](#) And we're talking with some of the top experts in the field, Doctor Nicole Riley, an integrative pain management doctor and mindfulness expert, along with Meryl Arnett, a meditation and yoga teacher.
- Rebecca: [00:37](#) I'm so glad we're talking about stress today, because stress and arthritis are just not a good combination for me, how about you, Julie?
- Julie: [00:44](#) No, they're an impossible combination.
- Rebecca: [00:47](#) Yeah, when I was finally able to narrow down what was causing my RA flares, I figured out that stress and overdoing things were my triggers, so, sometimes we just need to stop and take a breath.
- Julie: [00:57](#) Yeah. Especially when you live in a live yes kind of community, in a space, where you want to do everything, and you say yes to everything, we have to remember, sometimes, that stress can be that trigger that forces us to slow down when we don't want to at all.
- Julie: [01:12](#) So today, we'll talk about some strategies that we can employ to reduce our stress.
- Rebecca: [01:16](#) Because sometimes, saying no really is saying yes.
- Julie: [01:20](#) Exactly.
- Rebecca: [01:20](#) Yeah.



- Julie: [01:22](#) Exactly. So, we're gonna learn so much from our experts today.
- Rebecca: [01:24](#) Our first guest, Doctor Nicole Riley is going to teach us more about the pain-stress connection, and how people impacted with arthritis can use mindfulness to combat their pain.
- Julie: [01:35](#) And then after the break, we'll get some firsthand information from Atlanta-based meditation and yoga teacher, Meryl Arnett, who will debunk some of our meditation reservations, and help Rebecca and I think about the first steps that we should take to incorporate meditation and mindfulness into our lives.

BUMPER MUSIC

- Rebecca: [06:18](#) Nicole Riley M.D. is an anesthesiologist who also has her Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy specializing in mindfulness to treat chronic pain. Welcome to the podcast Nicole.
- Doctor Riley: [06:38](#) Thank you, happy to be here.
- Rebecca: [06:46](#) Julie and I know all too well how it feels when stress gets involved with our arthritis. Can you explain how stress impacts our bodies in general? And what does that look like when a person is managing arthritis symptoms?
- Doctor Riley: [07:00](#) Sure. when someone is feeling stressed, the body gets affected by the sympathetic nervous system b- being engaged. And what that means is, you know, your heart rate goes up, your blood pressure goes up. And you're engaging that fight or flight response. So all the blood is being shunted, shunted to areas in the body's um, that would help you fight or, you know, run away. And away from areas that are not necessary, like your GI tract. So all the blood gets sent into your muscles and um, and with stress that en- that engagement of



- the sympathetic nervous system allows for the release of cortisol and other stress hormones.
- Doctor Riley: [07:41](#) But it can also increase, you know, peoples' problems with insomnia or worsening of fatigue. And um, over time, it has you know, a myriad of other health issues, you know, in terms of high blood pressure, stroke risk, you know, and uh increased mood a- um, symptoms like depression and anxiety.
- Julie Eller: [08:55](#) Whenever I'm really on the cusp of a flare, I know it. Because I have brain fog and fatigue and heightened anxiety. And then my swelling starts to crop up as well. And it sounds like stress can have an impact on all of those different areas... Not just the swelling.
- Doctor Riley: [09:16](#) Absolutely. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Data that shows that the hormonal responses, from the stress actually exacerbate, you know, even neuropathic pain symptoms, symptoms and other symptoms. Not just by creating more muscle tensions in the body, but actually kind of reworking the wiring in the brain.
- Doctor Riley: [09:38](#) So you get this centralized, uh, kind of reworking of the brain so that the body becomes more sensitive to stress over time.
- Rebecca: [09:55](#) So it's like rewiring your brain when you have-
- Julie Eller: [09:59](#) (laughs).
- Rebecca: [09:59](#) ... too much stress?
- Doctor Riley: [10:01](#) Exactly.
- Julie Eller: [10:02](#) Oh no.
- Doctor Riley: [10:02](#) Exactly right.



Rebecca: [10:03](#) And that's [crosstalk 00:10:03] well honestly-

Julie Eller: [10:04](#) I wonder what my brain looks like (laughs).

Rebecca: [10:05](#) (laughs).

Doctor Riley: [10:05](#) (laughs). Great.

Rebecca: [10:05](#) Mine's a mess, I know that.

Julie Eller: [10:08](#) Yeah.

Doctor Riley: [10:10](#) Yeah, well it, you know unfortunately stress is something that we all deal with, you know, whether we have arthritis or not. So it's something we all could stand to learn from, you know. To figure out how to navigate better.

Julie Eller: [10:21](#) Are there tools that we can use to prevent that rewiring?
What can we do to combat that in our day to day?

Doctor Riley: [10:30](#) the reason why I was turned on to mindfulness was um, for this specific reason b- to, to figure out a way that we could engage with our stress with more peace and ease. And mindfulness as it turns out, actually does rewire the brain so that you're having less of a fear-based, less of a stress-based response in your body. And more of a mindful kind of like, what's called top-down regulation. Which is a more, um, uh, relaxed, more focused, more calm way of engaging the world. And that actually, there's functional MRI imaging that shows, you know, over a course of "X" amount of time with mindfulness meditation, you actually get rewiring of the brain.

Doctor Riley: [12:54](#) mindfulness has been shown in particular with rheumatoid arthritis to have effects, you know, decreased swollen joint counts, improvements in CRP levels, um, and um, basically improved pain



regulation. Um, also improvement in immune function, which is important for people with rheumatoid arthritis.

Julie Eller: [13:31](#) as a JA patient, I know that the impact of stress on the arthritis patient is huge. But on the whole family I know that it can have a big impact. Um, have you seen, is there any research, um, that would suggest that caregivers are more resilient if they add mindfulness into their life?

Doctor Riley: [14:03](#) Oh absolutely, there's been a lot of research even for Alzheimer's and other, you know, people who are caregiving that you can improve your quality of life. You can meet what's happening, you know, in your loved one with more peace and ease, more equanimity. When you're ever- able to be more mindful and less reactive.

Doctor Riley: [15:07](#) as long as you're bringing your present moment's awareness fully to whatever it is you're doing, that means you're being mindful.

Doctor Riley: [16:33](#) we encourage people to engage in informal mindfulness practices as much as we can. Trying to be, you know, as mindful as possible throughout the day.

Rebecca: [16:49](#) a lot of it is about just being present in the moment.

Julie Eller: [16:55](#) Right, right.

Rebecca: [16:56](#) Feeling all the feels.

Doctor Riley: [17:37](#) I think that often times you know, especially y- and you know, with my chronic pain patients. When I explain what mindfulness is there's this general



aversion to wanting to do it like, "I don't want to pay attention to my pain."

Doctor Riley: [17:59](#) we get in this paradox where we, well not with mindfulness but with pain and trying to avoid it. When we do that, we actually end, end up you know, worsening the symptoms or creating more pain in, in the resistance of it. Um... You know there's that saying like, "That which we resist persists."

Doctor Riley: [18:52](#)

Doctor Riley: (18:55) many people feel angry or betrayed by their body and they definitely don't want to be sitting in that.

Doctor Riley: (19:11) being able to sit with it and, and we can increase our tolerance for what is already here. And we might find that it's actually less burdensome to um... Engage with our pain when we can see how it fluctuates and we can see, you know, the subtleties, the shifts in the moment you know, versus just having this one fixed idea that it's always here, it's always this way, and it's always bad.

Rebecca: [19:56](#) it sounds like that, um, by practicing, uh, being mindful-

Julie Eller: [20:03](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rebecca: [20:03](#) ... you increase your body awareness. And so when you increase your body awareness, you're maybe better tuned in to what, what really is your pain at that given moment.

Doctor Riley: [20:15](#) Absolutely, we can start to see the pain just as the pain versus the pain plus a story around the pain. Much of our suffering in life comes from the story around it, you know, the things we can't do now. The way that it's changed our lives, which are all



legitimate and they're important. And you know, they inform who we are. But if we can start to um, see pain as just the you know, the emotional pain or just as the physical sensation without the resistance, then there's not that suffering, you know?

- Julie Eller: [20:57](#) Yeah. And I think that there are a lot of patients, I myself included, that in thinking about being mindful with my pain, that's a terrifying thought. To think about fully plugging in to this thing that I've been able to-
- Doctor Riley: [21:14](#) Right.
- Julie Eller: [21:14](#) ... compartmentalize and close off and be resilient to. When you're talking with-
- Doctor Riley: [21:19](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Julie Eller: [21:19](#) ... patients who are afraid, what type of, of advice do you offer them to help them take that first step?
- Doctor Riley: [21:29](#) Um... Well, you know, some, it depends. It depends on the p- on the person that I'm speaking with. It's, you know, it's very individualized.
- Doctor Riley: [23:12](#) even if it's just doing a really quick meditation and then increasing over time. But you know, just starting very small, very gently, you know,
- Doctor Riley: [23:55](#) Starting where it make sense for you. Maybe it's an informal practice. Maybe it's a formal practice through a course. Wherever makes sense for you.
- Rebecca: [28:46](#) Well thank you so much for sharing with us Dr. Riley. We really appreciate you teaching us a little bit more about mindfulness and that-
- Julie Eller: [28:58](#) Right.
- Rebecca: [8:58](#) ... it doesn't have to be a big scary thing to try to get into.



Rebecca: (29:25) could you give us three, three key takeaways that you would want, uh, people with arthritis to know about mindfulness?

Doctor Riley: (29:34) Sure.

Doctor Riley: [30:20](#) Be compassionate with whatever emotions that are arising in the moment.

Doctor Riley: [30:49](#) we can't necessarily stop stress or we can't stop the pain. But we can certainly start to look at the way that we maybe are resisting it.

Doctor Riley: [31:31](#) if there is no resistance around it, then the suffering diminishes or goes away entirely. Doctor Riley: (29:47) bringing awareness to how you're engaging your pain. Like what sort of thoughts are you engaging your pain with? And seeing if there's perhaps a different way that we can start to interface with our pain with more peace- peacefulness or gentleness. Or even kindness

Doctor Riley: [31:31](#) It's something just to experiment with.

Rebecca: [31:41](#) Okay.

Julie Eller: [31:42](#) Thank you so much. I think that those are some, some tactical tools that people can use to think about their pain, reframe their pain experience a little bit. So that's really helpful for us. And we hope it's really helpful for all of our listeners as well.

Doctor Riley: [32:03](#) I hope that it can help.

Promo: If you're interested in adding mindfulness to your routine, our new Vim app can help get you going. With Vim, you can set achievable goals and find mindfulness resources right at your fingertips. Plus, connect with others to share tips and cheer each other on. Download the free app at arthritis-dot-org-slash-vim, spelled V-I-M, or wherever you get your apps.

BUMPER MUSIC

Rebecca: [00:01](#) joining us today in the Live Yes! with Arthritis podcast studio is Meryl Arnett, a meditation and yoga



teacher, co-owner of the yoga and meditation center Sacred Chill West in Atlanta. Mother of two, wife and creator of the Mindful Minute podcast. Meryl, thank you so much for joining us today.

- Meryl Arnett: [00:21](#) Oh, it's my pleasure to be here.
- Julie: [00:55](#) I'm wondering if we can just start with what are some tips that you have for people who are thinking about getting started with mindfulness?
- Meryl Arnett: [01:21](#) Yeah, I mean, my tip is start.
- Julie: [01:22](#) (laughs)
- Rebecca: [01:24](#) (laughs)
- Meryl Arnett: [01:24](#) Right? It's so true, because I think that you say the word meditation or you say the word mindfulness, and it feels totally foreign and hard and-
- Julie: [01:32](#) Right.
- Meryl Arnett: [01:33](#) The immediate image is somebody, like, sitting cross-legged on the ground looking so peaceful and happy, and that's the furthest thing from most of us, right?
- Rebecca: [01:41](#) Right.
- Julie: [01:41](#) Right.
- Meryl Arnett: [01:41](#) And so the idea that you truly can download an app, that's such a great way to do it. There's a billion free ones out there.
- Julie: [01:48](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Meryl Arnett: [01:49](#) Sit down for one minute, five minutes-
- Julie: [01:51](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).



- Meryl Arnett: [01:52](#) And just listen. Just listen and look for a voice that resonates with you, that makes you feel good while you're listening, and that's what I would do to start.
- Julie: [02:00](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Meryl Arnett: [02:00](#) And then if you're really curious about it, there's a million ways to research appropriate centers you could go to or find online groups and really form a community around your practice, but just start.
- Rebecca: [03:25](#) So when we talk about being mindful, what does that entail?
- Meryl Arnett: [03:29](#) So mindfulness is really made up of three key components. Those components are being present, so being in the actual moment without judging it. So there's no, "This is a good moment. This is a bad moment. This is a boring moment." It's just the moment. And then, with compassion. And compassion is just this idea that, "I'm just gonna be a little bit kind to myself." So even if I sit down, and the whole time I'm like, "When is that bell gonna ring? This is so awkward. I feel like I can't do this." I'm still at the end gonna go, "I meditated. Great job," and get up and go on with my day. So the idea of taking time out to cultivate presence without judgment and with compassion is the ability to cultivate mindfulness, and it carries out through all of our waking minutes.
- Julie: [04:19](#) Do you find that there is an appropriate length of time to give yourself those three things?
- Meryl Arnett: [04:29](#) start with what you got. And if you tell me, "I literally have one minute. That's all I have." I'm gonna tell you to do it in one minute.
- Julie: [04:37](#) Okay.
- Meryl Arnett: [04:37](#) And you really can.
- Julie: [04:38](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).



- Meryl Arnett: [04:38](#) I think gold standard, try to start with 10 minutes. You'll really feel something happen if you give yourself 10 minutes.
- Julie: [04:45](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Meryl Arnett: [04:46](#) And man, if you do 20 minutes, then it's like a whole new world going on, right? And it's, you work up to it. You work up to it.
- Meryl Arnett: [06:46](#) And truly, the consistency matters so much more than the duration. So if you can meditate five minutes every single day, or 20 minutes once a week, do five minutes a day. You will get so much more benefit out than one time a week at 20 minutes. It makes a big difference to be consistent.
- Julie: [07:04](#) Absolutely. What about specifically for people with arthritis or living with chronic pain? How can mindfulness help them manage their pain, manage their care, navigate through their day-to-day?
- Meryl Arnett: [07:22](#) You know, I think one of the gifts of mindfulness is it gives us the ability to not just be in constant reaction mode, which is where we spend so much of our time.
- Julie: [07:33](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [07:34](#) Something happens, and my reaction is almost instantaneous, and mindfulness is starting to carve out this little bit of space between what happens and how I'm gonna choose to respond to it. And you heard I just used the key word, right?
- Julie: [07:48](#) (laughs)
- Meryl Arnett: [07:48](#) I get to choose how I wanna respond to it. So it's not like I'm dealing with chronic pain, and I'm gonna choose to be super happy about it. Let's be realistic, right?



- Julie: [07:57](#) Right. Thank you. (laughs)
- Meryl Arnett: [07:59](#) But it might be I'm having a really painful day, and I have the choice not to make it worse by beating myself up because of it. So maybe you're having a tough day, and you had intended to go out and run three errands that day, and it's not gonna happen. And maybe the normal response is, "I should have done that. I'm never gonna get this done. Now I'm more behind. I just let so and so down, and I said I was gonna do these things."
- Julie: [08:24](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [08:24](#) And now you're in physical pain, and you're in emotional anguish, and you really have the choice to release the emotional anguish. You can't maybe change the physical pain, but you can soften how much
you treat yourself with kindness or with difficulty around that discomfort.
- Rebecca: [08:40](#) I think that's a hard part for people living with chronic pain and people with arthritis is just saying, "It's okay that I can't get that done right now, because I just need to rest," or, "I need a minute," or-
- Rebecca: [08:53](#) That's just gonna have to go further down on the to-do list, because I need my time."
- Meryl Arnett: [09:00](#) That's compassion, and it's so foreign for all of us. I mean, that is not something that is taught to us as children is how to be kind to ourselves. We learn that we get better by beating ourselves up, right? We get better by eliminating the chocolate cake and shaming ourselves if we eat it.
- Julie: [09:18](#) (laughs)



- Meryl Arnett: [09:19](#) We get better by being tougher-
- Julie: [09:21](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [09:21](#) And working harder, and going faster.
- Julie: [09:23](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [09:23](#) And the truth of the matter is, that never helps us to grow. Psychology tells us for a fact, we don't grow by beating ourselves up. We grow by being kind to ourselves. And so, you know, I'm making a huge ask. I'm saying, "Change the culture," and I say it to every student who walks in the door, arthritis or not, right? Change the culture. Choose slowness. Choose stillness. Start there, and notice what happens if you say, "You know what? I'm just not gonna beat myself up about this today." What happens? It feels so different, and then the cool thing is, you go out and somebody's a jerk in front of you in the line at the post office, and instead of you getting all riled up about it, you're like, "You know what? It's fine. Maybe they're having a bad day. It's fine." You have a little bit more capacity for you to be kind to others, because you were just kind to yourself.
- Julie: [11:25](#) . I was saying to our previous guest that in having arthritis for 18 years, you would learn how to compartmentalize, push that pain into one small box, and keep it in a small piece of your brain that you try not to acknowledge. And the thing about mindfulness that scares me is taking the moment to acknowledge it peacefully. how have you helped guide people through those first starting phases? What have you given to people to empower them to take that time?
- Meryl Arnett: [11:35](#) So one of the things I do quite a bit is meditations that really just invite you to tap into your senses for a few



minutes. So I might not say, "Let's pay attention to your pain for five minutes,"-

Julie: [11:47](#) (laughs)

Rebecca: [11:47](#) (laughs)

Meryl Arnett: [11:47](#) Because that sounds horrible.

Julie: [11:48](#) Yes it does.

Meryl Arnett: [11:53](#) But I might say, "Let's pay attention to, um, sight." Even with closed eyes-

Julie: [12:00](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meryl Arnett: [12:00](#) You see, like, little bits of color, dots, things moving around behind your eyelids-

Julie: [12:04](#) Yeah.

Meryl Arnett: [12:04](#) You don't have to judge it. You don't have to describe it. You see it, and then we're gonna listen to sound for a minute.

Meryl Arnett: [12:16](#) It doesn't matter if there's a kid crying in the next room. It doesn't matter if the UPS truck backs up outside your door. You're just gonna hear all these sounds that are happening right now, and then, you know, maybe we're seated in chairs, and if we're lucky, we don't have shoes on. So we move our toes around, and we feel like, "What's happening under our feet? Is it hardwood? Is it carpet? Is it linoleum? What's going on? What am I sitting on?" And that's enough, right?

Julie: [12:39](#) Yeah.

Meryl Arnett: [13:01](#) And so it's just giving your body the sense of, "It's safe to be here. Let's stay a minute," and eventually if you do that-



- Julie: [13:10](#) Hmm.
- Meryl Arnett: [13:10](#) You'll be like, "It's safe to be here and X-Y-Z part of my body really hurts today,-
- Julie: [13:17](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [13:17](#) And it's safe to be here, and maybe I also feel some sense of shame around that, and it's safe to be here." We build our tolerance for being uncomfortable, and that's a huge gift.
- Julie: [13:33](#) That is amazing.
- Rebecca: [13:51](#) it can be done anywhere at any time. You don't have to be laying down, right?
- Meryl Arnett: [14:00](#) You really don't. You, um, so I have two little kids, and more often than not, I end up sitting on the couch, turning the TV on, and being like, "Mommy's gonna meditate for five minutes," and I do it with one eye closed and one eye half open-
- Rebecca: [14:15](#) (laughs)
- Julie: [14:15](#) (laughs)
- Meryl Arnett: [14:24](#) Present without judgment and with compassion wherever you are. If you're lying in bed today, lay in bed.
- Meryl Arnett: [14:34](#) Sit on the couch. Sit in your favorite chair, doesn't matter. Wherever you feel the safest and the most comfortable.
- Julie: [15:12](#) I've had arthritis since I was seven, and I'm wondering how can, uh, JA families incorporate some mindfulness and some meditation in their life if they have small kids? Is it safe? Is it not safe? What do you think?
- Meryl Arnett: [15:31](#) It's incredibly safe.



Julie: [15:32](#) Okay.

Meryl Arnett: [15:32](#) Um, I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt, the only way this resonates at all is if they see you doing it.

Julie: [15:39](#) Hmm.

Meryl Arnett: [15:40](#) Because I've tried all the like, "Let's lay down, and do this cute..." and they're like, "Mom. I don't care. This is so stupid."

Julie: [15:47](#) (laughs) Right.

Meryl Arnett: [15:47](#) But the minute I sit down and close my eyes, they're like, "What are you doing? Why are you doing that?"

Julie: [15:53](#) "Can I do it too?"

Meryl Arnett: [15:54](#) "Can I do it with you?"

Julie: [15:54](#) (laughs)

Rebecca: [15:54](#) (laughs)

Meryl Arnett: [15:55](#) And the answer is, "Yes."

Julie: [15:55](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meryl Arnett: [15:56](#) Every, even if I'm like, "Gosh, I really just wanted five minutes to myself."

Julie: [16:00](#) Yeah.

Meryl Arnett: [16:00](#) I say, "Yes," every time-

Julie: [16:01](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Meryl Arnett: [16:02](#) Because if they say, "I wanna do it," great. And the kind of rule of thumb is it's a minute for how ever many years old they are.

Julie: [16:09](#) Okay.



- Meryl Arnett: [16:09](#) So for my four year old son, four minutes is the max, and really, truly it's more like three minutes for him, and then he's kind of done.
- Julie: [16:16](#) (laughs)
- Meryl Arnett: [16:22](#) Calm is one of my favorite apps, and they have a bunch of kid meditations on there.
- Julie: [16:29](#) Oh, great.
- Meryl Arnett: [16:29](#) So I'll just play one of those, and we'll just do it together.
- Julie: [16:31](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Julie: [18:23](#) you mentioned that Calm has a lot of kid meditations, um, and one of the things that is intimidating about meditating or getting started is knowing where to look. Is Calm the place to go? Are there lots of apps? What are you think?
- Meryl Arnett: [18:36](#) So I think the thing is try them all-
- Julie: [18:39](#) Okay.
- Meryl Arnett: [18:39](#) And find the voice that you're like, "Yes.-
- Julie: [18:41](#) (laughs)
- Rebecca: [18:41](#) Yeah.
- Meryl Arnett: [18:42](#) That voice feels really good to me."
- Julie: [18:44](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Meryl Arnett: [18:45](#) Because an annoying voice is gonna ruin the experience for you, right?
- Julie: [18:48](#) Right.
- Meryl Arnett: [18:49](#) So Calm has a lovely female narrator. Um, Headspace is a British male, and Insight meditation



Timer has a million different meditation teachers on there.

Rebecca: [23:12](#)

So, um, if we're gonna talk about any key takeaways that we wanna make sure people with arthritis leave our podcast with today, what would you say the key takeaways are for, uh, incorporating mindfulness into their day to help manage their symptoms?

Meryl Arnett: [23:31](#)

You can meditate anywhere for however long you feel comfortable doing, and if you do it on a consistent basis, you will feel a significant difference in the emotional tone of your life. That's the thing that I have noticed the most in my own personal practice is how much my emotional wellness has shifted, because I meditate every day. It doesn't mean I don't get stressed out. It doesn't mean I don't lose my temper, but I'm so much nicer to myself when I do, and I don't hold it as long. So, you know, getting stuck in traffic and running late for something early in the morning doesn't then destroy my entire day. So if I was gonna say anything, I'd say, "Just do it." (laughs)

Julie: [24:14](#)

Just do it.

Rebecca: [24:15](#)

Just do it.

Julie: [24:15](#)

If you do have arthritis and you wanna go to a live class, you have done app maybe and are trying something new, how do you ask for accommodations in the class so that you know you aren't gonna be sitting criss-cross applesauce on the floor uncomfortable throughout?

Meryl Arnett: [24:36](#)

So, um, I would say absolutely do your research. Call the place that you think you're gonna go take a class, and tell them straight up without any hesitation, "This is what I'm dealing with, and this is what I need to be comfortable. I can't sit on the floor. What else is my



option?" And make sure that you feel like the person who responds is no hesitation, "This is not a problem. We have chairs. We have cushions." We have a couch in our studio.

Julie: [25:05](#)

Wow.

Meryl Arnett: [25:05](#)

So make sure that you're talking to somebody who, without hesitation, says, "We're totally prepared for that. Come on in."

Julie: [25:28](#)

That's such a comfort, because you never ever wanna be standing out like a sore thumb, and saying, "Oh, hey guys. I have arthritis." Those moments where you can feel a part of a community that's all doing this together, those are some of the most helpful in healing and resilience for me. So that's great.

Meryl Arnett: [25:45](#)

And that sense of community will keep you meditating, also.

Meryl Arnett: [25:59](#)

And if you find either an in-person place, or an online community where there's a live component, and you feel like, "I have some accountability. There are people that expect to see my face today,"-

Julie: [26:10](#)

Yeah.

Meryl Arnett: [26:10](#)

It will help hold that practice sacred for you.

Julie: [26:43](#)

This has been remarkable. I can just imagine coming to one of your classes or listening to your podcast and getting even more goodness in my day-to-day. So thank you so much.

Meryl Arnett: [27:01](#)

Thank you. This has been so much fun.

If you have some time after the episode, check out our bonus edition of A Mindful Minute with Meryl, where we drink some tea and have some true connection to each other and to ourselves. Thanks for joining us.



Stay tuned in for a bonus edition for a Mindful Minute with Meryl practice after the closing. It's worth the wait. Grab a cup of coffee or tea and join us in this practice.