



A Clinician's Guide to Teaching Mindfulness

What is Urge Surfing?

Urge surfing is a mindfulness practice used to cope with cravings, especially around addictions.

Urge Surfing in 3 Steps:

1. Locating the sensations of craving in the body. Where can you feel it? Where exactly is it located? Noticing each place in the body that it is felt.
2. Choosing one of the strongest sensations to work with. Paying close attention to it, being as specific as possible, taking a deep interest in it. Is there a feeling of heat or cold? Numb or tingling? Sharp or dull? Do muscles feel tight or at ease? Does the sensation have boundaries? Where does it begin and end? Describe this to yourself.
3. Noticing what happens. Does the sensation intensify or diminish? Is the location constant or does it travel? Do the qualities of the sensation change? Does your attention get distracted?

To Remember:

- Urges pass all by themselves. All urges, no matter how strong, will eventually pass.
- Urges arise like ocean waves, and they crest and fall away. They are often strongest just before they "break".
- Regular mindfulness practice prepares us to meet urges with greater skill when they arise.
- This practice replaces fear of urges with interest in the present moment experience of them.
- Urges are a natural part of the recovery process and are not "failures".
- Urges that are not fed grow weaker over time.

The term "urge surfing" was coined through Alan Marlatt and the Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP).