

# Study suggests that washing dishes decreases stress

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Washing those dreadful dishes after a long day seems like the furthest thing from relaxation. Or is it?

Student and faculty researchers at Florida State University have found that mindfully washing dishes calms the mind and decreases stress.

Published in the journal *Mindfulness*, the study looked at whether washing dishes could be used as an informal contemplative practice that promotes a positive state of mindfulness—a meditative method of focusing attention on the emotions and thoughts of the present moment.

"I've had an interest in mindfulness for many years, both as a

contemplative practitioner and a researcher," said Adam Hanley, a [doctoral candidate](#) in FSU College of Education's Counseling/School Psychology program and one of the study's authors. "I was particularly interested in how the mundane activities in life could be used to promote a mindful state and, thus, increase overall sense of well-being."

After conducting a study with 51 students, the researchers found that mindful dishwashers—those who focused on the smell of the soap, the warmth of the water, the feel of the [dishes](#)—reported a decrease in nervousness by 27 percent and an increase in mental inspiration by 25 percent. The control group, on the other hand, didn't experience any benefits.

**More information:** "Washing Dishes to Wash the Dishes: Brief Instruction in an Informal Mindfulness Practice." *Mindfulness* [DOI: 10.1007/s12671-014-0360-9](#)

Provided by Florida State University

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