

Meditation, Mind and Health

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Introduction:

Meditation, Mind and Health

There is no doubt that meditation can promote our mind, temperament and health. Meditation can change the quality of our lives. It can help us to be peaceful and happy; essentially, it also improves symptoms of stress-related physical conditions, controls depression, and promotes emotional well-being. It increases self-awareness.

Stabilizing the mind is meditation. The mind is like a monkey jumping from one thought to another. It is constantly swinging like a monkey, sometimes this mind jumps into the memories of the past, sometimes in the worries of tomorrow. The mind practically continues to generate thoughts. This is how we can create around 50,000 views per day. It is our mind that keeps us sad.

We need to eliminate stress and anxiety in our lives. How can we do that? It is possible to spend time in silence. That's where meditation can help us with this. As long as the mind keeps jumping from one thought to another, from one worry to another, we cannot meditate. We have to control the mind of a monkey and make it the mind of a monk.

It doesn't matter what position we sit in, where we are, whether we are in a cave or in our bedroom, or how we're sitting. What matters: can the mind be still? Can it be cool? Those who specialize in meditation talk about that state of thoughtlessness, which is called Buddhist meditation.

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Meditation, Mind, Mood and Health

We cannot see or touch stress, but we can feel its effects on our mind and body. Initially, stress speeds up our heart and breathing rates and elevates our blood pressure. When we are constantly under stress, our adrenal glands overproduce cortisol hormone. The excessive release of this hormone affects the function of our brain, immune system and other organs. Chronic tension can cause headaches, anxiety, depression, heart disease and even premature death.

Although we may not be able to eliminate the roots of stress, we can reduce its effects on our bodies. Meditation is the easiest and most effective way to de-stress the body as well as the mind. Meditation is a process in which we shift our concentration from external objects to the inside.

Types of Meditation

Guided Meditation: Visualization techniques are used to prepare ourselves mentally. In this method of meditation, we focus our attention on the contours of different parts of the body. Keeping them in mind, we form mental images of places or situations in which we try to use as many of our senses as possible, such as smells, sights, sounds, and textures.

Mantra Meditation: In this type of meditation, we silently repeat a calm word, thought or phrase to stop the thoughts distracting us. Like Shanti or the Om recitation.

Mindfulness meditation: This type of meditation is based on an increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment. In the meantime, we work to move negative thoughts into positive ones. In mindfulness meditation, we broaden our awareness. We focus on what we experience during meditation, such as the flow of our breath.

Qi Gong: This practice is usually a mixture of meditation, relaxation, physical movement, and breathing exercises to restore and maintain balance. It is a part of Chinese traditional medicine.

Walking Meditation: Our attention is focused on both the body and the mind as we breathe in certain actions with our steps.

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Tai Chi: This is a form of mild Chinese martial art. In this, physical movements related to martial arts are done like a drift with a slow breathing rate.

Transcendental Meditation: In this method, we use a particular word, sound or phrase and repeat it silently. This form of meditation gives us a feeling of deep relaxation.

Yoga: In this method we practice a number of asanas and controlled breathing exercises to promote a more flexible body and a calm mind. As we move forward while doing such asanas, it helps us to shift our attention from our busy day and focus on our movements.

Meditation Practice

Meditation does not require any special items. For this you do not think about any particular posture, place, time, etc.

You can make meditation as formal or informal as you want. Some people include meditation in their daily routine. For example, they might start and end each day with an hour of meditation. The simplicity of meditation is that for this we do not need any equipment. All you need is a quiet place and a few minutes every day. Start with 10 minutes a day, or even commit to five minutes twice a day. Meditate at the same time every morning to make it a habit like any other.

Some general guidelines for starting meditation are as follows: -

- a. Set aside a place to meditate. You'll build up a special feeling there, which will make it easier to get into a meditative state more quickly.
- b. Keep your eyes closed, or focus your gaze on the object you've chosen.
- c. Slowly and deeply take a quiet breath.
- d. Keep your mind focused on the inside. If it wanders outward, slowly move it back to the center. In this mindfulness we can also focus our attention on our navel.
- e. Breathe peacefully and comfortably. When you exhale, try to take away your fantasies, wrong thoughts, and feelings.
- f. For this, you can also chant aloud. In this, Om recitation aloud can help in taking out the thoughts.

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Elements of Meditation

Meditation has the following characteristics:

Concentration: One of the most important elements is to focus your distracted mind. Meditation is the art of shifting your mind from external thoughts and focusing within yourself. We can focus our attention on a specific object, an image, a mantra, or the movement of our breath. Every task of our daily life should be tried to perform with maximum concentration.

Sense of Deprivation: If you are a beginner, it is a bit difficult to practice meditation. Our words carry more than half the power. First silence yourself for an hour or two, then for half a day, then for a whole day, and over time the number of days is increased. Learn to be as silent as possible and speak very little.

We can put a black bandage on our eyes while meditating. Our eyes provide us a way out. The more we are blind, the more our brain becomes focused inwards. It is believed that by closing the eyes with black bandage we can significantly reduce brain stress and increase deep sleep.

We should close our ears to block out extraneous sounds. Unwanted sounds affect our senses. It acts to distract us.

Focusing on different parts of the body: While using this technique, you focus on different parts of your body and try to observe them in your mind. Gradually try to mix it with the breathing movement. Allow the body to inhale new energy while inhaling and allow extreme relaxation while exhaling.

Deep breathing: In this method we use the diaphragm muscles rather than the shoulders and chest muscles during breathing. If the breath comes out from the navel it is as deep and helpful in meditating. The purpose is to slow your breathing, take in more oxygen and reduce the use of the muscles of the shoulder, neck and upper chest while breathing. It has also been observed that the breath of big spiritual and knowledgeable people is taken very deeply and near to the navel. That is why we should practice deep breathing in the morning as soon as we open our eyes, we should take a slow and deep breath with pleasure. As breathing deepens, the amount of oxygen in our body increases and decreases the total number of hours of sleep.

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Peaceful environment: The more peaceful, soundless environment around us to meditate, the more it helps in meditating. The more our senses are silent, the more active it becomes in understanding and performing tasks in normal life. In the same way it starts working under our control.

Breaking Habits: We will not be able to control our disturbed mind until we break our routine habits. Food is mainly our habit, under which we live from birth to death. If we break this habit, it helps us to adopt new meditation habits easily. That's why use as little food as you can.

Repeat the mantra: You can create your own mantra, whether it is religious or secular.

Take a walk and meditate. Combining a walk with meditation is an efficient and healthy way to relax. Combine your foot stepping movement with inhaling and exhaling.

Yoga: You can practice meditation whether you are sitting, lying down, walking, or in other positions or activities. Just try to be comfortable so that you can get the most out of your meditation. Its aim is to maintain good posture during meditation.

Read and reflect: Many people say that they benefit from reading poems or sacred texts, and they take a few moments to quietly reflect on their meaning. You can also listen to sacred music, spoken word, or any music that you find relaxing or inspiring. You can write your thoughts in a diary or discuss them with a friend or spiritual leader.

Open Attitude: Let thoughts pass through your mind without judgment. Try to keep yourself happy and smug throughout the day. Relax your body, self and mind.

Various studies on meditation have come to our notice over the years.

The practice of meditation is thousands of years old, but research into its health benefits is relatively new and promising. A research review published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found meditation to be helpful in relieving anxiety, pain, and depression. For depression, meditation was found to be as effective as an antidepressant.

Meditation Helps Preserve the Aging Brain:

A while back, a UCLA study found that long-term meditators had better

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preserved brains than normal people. Individuals who meditated for an average of 20 years had a greater amount of gray matter throughout their brains – although older meditators still had some amount of deficit than younger meditators, this was not as pronounced as non-meditators. "We expected small and specific effects located in some of the regions previously associated with attention," said study author Florian Kurth. "Instead, what we really saw was a widespread effect of meditation that involved regions throughout the brain."

Meditation reduces activity in the "me center" of the brain.

The most interesting studies conducted over the years at Yale University found that mindfulness meditation reduces activity in the Default Mode Network (DMN), the brain network responsible for the brain. wandering and self-referential thoughts - the "monkey minds." The DMN is "on" or activated when we are not thinking about anything in particular, when our mind is simply wandering from thought to thought. Since mind-wandering is usually related to being less happy, belligerent, and worrying about the past.

Several studies have shown that meditation calms the effect on the DMN and even when the mind begins to wander, due to new connections, meditations are better able to break out of it.

Its effects are rival antidepressants for depression, anxiety:

One research study looked at the relationship between mindfulness meditation and its ability to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and pain. Researcher Madhav Goel and his team found that the effect size of meditation was moderate at 0.3. If this sounds low, keep in mind that the effect size for antidepressants is also 0.3, which creates an effect of attention. Meditation is, after all, an active form of brain training. "Many people have this idea that meditation means sitting and doing nothing," says Goel. "But this is not true. Meditation is an active training of the mind to raise awareness, and different meditation programs approach this in different ways." Meditation is no magic bullet for depression, as there is no cure for it, but it is one of the tools that can help manage symptoms.

Meditation can alter the volume of the key areas of the brain:

In 2011, Sarah Lazarus and her team at Harvard found that mindfulness meditation can actually change the structure of the brain: in eight weeks of

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mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). an increase was found. Cortical thickening in the hippocampus, which controls learning and memory, and in certain areas of the brain that play a role in emotion regulation and self-referential processing. It also decreases the area, which is responsible for fear, anxiety, and stress—and these changes matched participants' self-reports of their stress levels, indicating that meditation not only changes the brain, but it also affects our health. Subjective perception and feelings also change.

Meditation can help with addiction:

Studies have shown that, given its effect on self-control areas of the brain, meditation can be very effective in helping people recover from different types of addictions. For one example, mindfulness training was given against the American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking (FFS) program, and found that those who had learned mindfulness were several times more likely to quit smoking by the end of their training, because Maybe because meditation helps people "dissipate" a state of craving from the act of smoking, one doesn't always have to lead to the other, but rather you experience the whole and "wave" of craving. Turns out, other research has found that mindfulness training, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and mindfulness Based stress reduction prevention (MBRP) may be helpful in treating other forms of addiction.

Short breaks of meditation can help kids in school:

Some schools have begun to implement meditation into their daily schedules, and with good effect: A San Francisco district introduced a twice-daily meditation program in some of its high-risk schools – and found that it resulted in suspension of students. A decrease was observed, and GPA and attendance increased. Studies have confirmed the cognitive and emotional benefits of meditation for school children, but perhaps more work will need to be done before it can achieve more widespread acceptance.

Meditating to diagnose a mental problem:

Two areas of the brain play a special role in our mental health: the amygdala and the Default Mode Network (DMN). The amygdala is the area of the brain that controls concentration, memory, and emotions, such as fear, anger, and sadness. Although "feelings" are not inherently bad, they can sometimes go awry.

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The second area, the Default Mode Network, is the part of your brain that is guilty of daydreaming and other distracting, wandering thoughts. If left untrained, our imaginative minds can lead to depression, anxiety and insomnia. Establishing a daily meditation practice can reduce activity in these two areas of the brain, consequently calming our mind, thoughts and feelings. You may experience better sleep, less anxiety and a more positive outlook towards life.

Meditation for a Healthy Heart:

When you're having a stressful day at work or are overwhelmed at home, strange "stress hormones" called cortisol, adrenaline, and norepinephrine are released. Higher amounts of these hormones get into the blood and this speeds up our heart rate and blood pressure and prepares our bodies for challenges, also known as our "fight and flight" response. This stress related to heart and lungs damages our kidneys etc. It is some of the leading causes of death in America. That same meditation activates our body's "rest and digestion" functions, counteracting our "flight-or-fight" responses. Incorporating exercise into a daily routine has been linked to lowering heart rate and blood pressure, which can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Conclusion:

Meditation is not a panacea, but there is certainly a lot of evidence that it can do some good for those who practice it regularly. From Anderson Cooper and Congressman Tim Ryan to Google and Apple and Target (TGT) are adding meditations to their schedules. And its benefits begin to be felt after a relatively small amount of exercise. Meditation is beneficial rather than harmful. If you only have a few minutes in the morning or evening (or both) instead of turning on your phone/TV or going online, see what happens if you try to calm your mind, or at least focus on yourself. Give thoughts and let them go without reacting to them. If the research is correct, just a short amount of attention can make a huge difference.

As we become conscious of our monkey-like thoughts, our mind starts to calm down, our monkey-like thoughts eventually become monks i.e. 'Monkey mind becomes monk' and when we reach this state, then We can take charge of our lives, our minds, our health, our moods. Remember, we must first understand what meditation is. What does it mean? What is the

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meaning of this? Once we do that, we can meditate all the time and we can be the masters of our mind and our lives.

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