

## The Health Benefits of Meditation

### Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

Meditation, long associated with transcendence, has in recent years gained distinction in reducing stress and helping with focus and concentration. Today, there are many different types of meditation practiced in the United States. Meditation methods that use specific breathing techniques and muscle relaxation may also provide emotional benefits, such as relaxation and calmness. Meditation is something anyone can do – anywhere, anytime – and even better, it doesn't have to cost anything. <sup>(1)</sup>

#### Meditation and your emotional well-being

By practicing meditation, even for just a little bit each day, you may experience enhanced physical and emotional well-being. Emotional benefits from meditation may: <sup>(1)</sup>

- Reduce negative thoughts, increase self-awareness, and help you focus on the present
- Achieve a different perspective on stressful situations
- Help build skills to handle stress

#### Meditation and illness

Meditation may also help you manage or ease stress brought on by certain medical conditions, such as those shown below. Talk to your doctor about using meditation as a way to lessen the stress in your life. <sup>(1)</sup>

- Anxiety disorders and depression
- Heart disease and high blood pressure
- Sleep problems

#### Types of meditation

There are many different ways you can meditate to relax your state of being to help reach inner peace. Various ways to meditate are: <sup>(1)</sup>

- **Guided** – Use as many senses as you can to help form mental pictures of situations that help you relax.
- **Mindfulness** – Have increased awareness of your breathing, senses, and emotion, and observe them without judgment.
- **Yoga** – A series of postures and poses with controlled breathing, balance, and concentration resulting in a more flexible body and calmer mind.

#### Features of meditation

Meditation offers different elements for the different ways you may meditate. Some more common ones are: <sup>(1)</sup>

- **Focused attention** – Allows you to free your mind from all of the distractions that can lead to stress.
- **Relaxed, deep breathing** – Allows you to take in more oxygen, reducing the use of your shoulder, neck, and chest muscles – helping you breathe more efficiently using your abdominal muscles and diaphragm.
- **Quiet and calm setting** – Especially important for a beginner as it will help your concentration by eliminating outside noise, such as TV, radios, and cellphones.
- **Comfortable position** – Any position will work as long as you are comfortable – comfort will allow you to get the most out of your meditation session.

#### Ways to practice meditation

You can learn meditation from trained instructors but it's also easy to practice on your own. <sup>(1)</sup>

- **Breathe deeply and slowly** – Focus complete attention on feeling and listening as you inhale and exhale through your nostrils.
- **Look over your body** – As you focus on breathing, add self-awareness of your body's sensations, such as pain, warmth, tension, or relaxation – picture your breathing coming in and out of different areas of your body.
- **Walk and meditate** – Just by slowing down your walking pace and repeatedly focusing only on the movement of your feet or legs, you will not only relax but be doing something healthy at the same time.
- **Read and reflect** – Reading poems and inspirational quotes or even listening to music may help provide inspiration as you reflect on the meaning of the words and the message.
- **Focus on love and gratitude** – Focus on a particular object or being that represents the feelings of love, compassion, and gratitude in your life.

<sup>(1)</sup> [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

This is informational only, not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.  
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