

MEDITATION: A QUICK AND EASY METHOD FOR LOWERING STRESS

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ABSTRACT

Many Western countries, particularly the USA, have seen a rise in popularity of meditation. A growing body of research indicates that meditation has a number of health advantages, and these results have sparked interest in the medical community. The ancient Vedic texts from India's Vedic era contain descriptions of the meditation practice that was first developed there. Ayurveda (Science of Life), a comprehensive, all -natural health care system that originated in India during the pre-Vedic era, includes meditation as one of its therapeutic modalities. Today, a variety of different practices are collectively referred to as "meditation" in a loose sense. The real goal of meditation, according to Vedic science, is to establish a connection with one's innermost Self. Techniques that accomplish that goal serve the Meditation's neurological and physiological correlates have been studied in the past. In order to clarify the deeper underlying mechanism of the positive effects connected with meditation, this article describes the meditation process at a more fundamental level. A summary of the research on meditation's effects is provided.

Key words: *consciousness, meditation, and Ayurveda.*

INTRODUCTION: Stress affects health and family life. Hans Selye (1936) first introduced the term stress into life science. The stress response is a complex emotion that produces physiological changes to prepare us, to defend ourselves from the threat or flee from it. Stress at job can lead to poor health and even injury (Sauter et al., 1999). Stress is a silent killer and prolonged exposure to stress may exert harmful effect on physical, Psychological and behavioural well being of an individual. Stress has emerged as a major issue and has reached alarming proportions. Meditation can act as an antidote to reduce stress.

Types of meditation

There are many types of meditation and relaxation techniques that have meditation components.

Guided meditation; with this method of meditation ,mental images of places or situations is imagined. Senses such as smells, sights, sounds and textures are being used for this. Meditation of this type may be led by a guide or teacher.

Mindfulness meditation; this type of meditation is based on increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment. One becomes observer and can observe his thoughts and emotions but lets them pass without judgment.

Tai chi; this is a form of gentle Chinese martial arts. In this meditation, one perform a self-paced series of postures or movements in a slow, graceful manner while practicing deep breathing.

Transcendental meditation; In this meditation mantra, word, sound or phrase are used repeatedly silently, to narrow conscious awareness and eliminate all thoughts from mind. Entire focus is on mantra to achieve a state of perfect stillness and consciousness.

Yoga; A series of postures and controlled breathing exercises are performed to promote a more flexible body and a calm mind.

MEDITATION AND ILLNESS:

If you have a medical condition, especially one that could be made worse by stress, meditation may also be helpful. Although a growing body of scientific evidence points to the health benefits of meditation, some researchers think it is still too early to draw any firm conclusions about those benefits. In light of this, some research indicates that meditation may benefit conditions like: Allergies, anxiety disorders, asthma, binge eating, cancer, fatigue, heart disease, high blood pressure, pain, sleep issues, substance abuse, and more. If you suffer from any of these ailments or other health issues, be sure to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of meditation with your doctor. In some cases, meditation can make the symptoms of some mental health conditions worse.

Benefits of meditation; According to Dr. Gaurav Bissa, Dr. Amit Sharmain, meditation relaxes body and focus thoughts on one thing for a sustained period. This occupies mind, diverting it from the problems that are causing stress and this clears away stress hormones. Meditation is a useful and practical relaxation technique.

Certain studies suggests that meditation practices may impact physiological pathways, including the immune and neuroendo- crine systems, which are modulated by stress and are relevant to disease development and progression (Taylor,1995; Carlson et al., 2003,; Davidson et al., 2003; Ospina et al., 2007).

According to Harvard Cardiologist Herbert Benson (1984), tran- scendental meditation promotes the —relaxation response, mind becomes quiet and focused. This meditation styles induc

a host of biochemical and physical changes in the body, which may be collectively referred to as the “relaxation response” that includes changes in metabolism, heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, and brain chemistry. Also people with a high sense of humour are able to manage stress (Abel, 2002)

A study (Broome et al, 2005) conducted to see effect of Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique on Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), showed that meditators maintained the equilibrium under stress more effectively than non-meditators.

The art of meditation is one of the best ways to reduce stress in the workplace. Companies like IBM Corp., Medtronic Inc, and Shuster Laboratories Inc. are offering meditation programs on-site to their employees to help them reduce stress.

A study (Lazar, et al., 2005) shows thicker cortical regions related to attention and sensory processing in long-term meditation practitioners compared to non-meditators. Also it suggests that meditation practice may offset cortical thinning brought on by aging.

In general meditation can give a sense of calm, peace, emotional well-being and overall health. And these benefits don't end with the end of meditation session. Meditation can help carry calmly throughout day. Meditation also might be useful if you have a medical condition, especially one that may be worsened by stress such as Allergies, Anxiety disorders, Asthma, Depression, Fatigue, Heart disease, High blood pressure, Pain and Sleep disorder.

WAYS TO PRACTICE MEDITATION:

As you breathe in and out through your nostrils, pay close attention to how you're feeling and hearing. Slowly and deeply inhale. When your thoughts stray, gently bring them back to your breathing.

- **Run a body scan.** When utilizing this method, pay close attention to various body parts.

Recognize the various sensations you are experiencing in your body, such as pain, tension,

warmth, or relaxation. Exercise your breathing while scanning your body, and visualize breathing heat or relaxation into and out of various body parts.

- **Say a mantra aloud.** You can come up with your own mantra, whether it be spiritual or not. Examples If you have a deep breathing problem, meditation might also be helpful. Due to the fact that breathing is a natural process, this technique is suitable for beginners. Concentrate solely on your breathing. You can come up with your own mantra, whether it be spiritual or not. The Jesus Prayer in the Christian tradition, the holy name of God in Judaism, or the om mantra of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Eastern religions are examples of religious mantras.
- **Take a walk and reflect.** A productive and beneficial way to unwind is to combine meditation with a walk. Anywhere you're walking, whether it's a peaceful forest, a city sidewalk, or a shopping center, you can use this technique. To focus when using this technique, slow down your walking speed.
- **Pray regularly.** The most well-known and frequently used form of meditation is prayer. In most religious traditions, there are both spoken and written prayers. You have the option of saying your own prayers out loud or reading others'. For examples, look in the self-help or 12-step recovery section of your neighborhood bookstore. Consult your pastor, priest, rabbi, or other spiritual authority about available support systems.
- **Read and think.** Many people claim that reading poems or sacred texts and giving themselves some time to think about their meaning in silence has positive effects. Additionally, you can listen to any calming or motivating music, spoken word, or sacred music. You might want to journal your reflections or speak with a friend or family member about them.
- **Concentrate on showing love and gratitude.** With love and gratitude woven throughout your thoughts, you concentrate your attention on a sacred object or being during

this type of meditation. You can also close your eyes and visualize the object or look at pictures of it.

CONCLUSION:

Meditation is a tool for Life Enhancement, Efficiency, Stress Management, Emotional balance and Spiritual Fulfillment. It helps in balancing mind and body and increases mental alertness, concentration – resulting in clarity of decision making. Meditation is beneficial for physical health, illness and possibly well-being, strengthening the Assessment Center, weakening the unhelpful aspects of the Ego Center, strengthening the helpful parts of the Ego Center (involved with empathy and understanding others) and changing the connections to/ from the bodily sensation/fear centers such that one experience sensations in a less reactive, more balanced and holistic way. But the choice still remains between the selections of various meditative techniques. As all human beings are not same, everybody is having different type of psychology. So the selection of technique depends upon the nature of person. The meditation reduces anxiety, increase concentration leads to relaxed state of mind, but this state should not be confined to the period for which meditation is done, it should be the permanent state of mind while doing normal routine day to day activities also.

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