

Meditation: A simple/fast way to reduce stress

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858?p=1>

Meditation can wipe away the day's stress, bringing with it inner peace. See how you can easily learn to practice meditation whenever you need it most.

If stress has you anxious, tense and worried, you might try meditation. Spending even a few minutes in meditation can help restore your calm and inner peace.

Anyone can practice meditation. It's simple and doesn't cost much. And you don't need any special equipment.

You can practice meditation wherever you are. You can meditate when you're out for a walk, riding the bus, waiting at the doctor's office or even in the middle of a business meeting.

Meditation has been around for thousands of years. Early meditation was meant to help deepen understanding of the sacred and mystical forces of life. These days, meditation is most often used to relax and lower stress.

Meditation is a type of mind-body complementary medicine. Meditation can help you relax deeply and calm your mind.

During meditation, you focus on one thing. You get rid of the stream of thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. This process can lead to better physical and emotional well-being.

Meditation can give you a sense of calm, peace and balance that can benefit your emotional well-being and your overall health. You also can use it to relax and cope with stress by focusing on something that calms you. Meditation can help you learn to stay centered and keep inner peace.

These benefits don't end when your meditation session ends. Meditation can help take you more calmly through your day. And meditation may help you manage symptoms of some medical conditions.

Meditation and emotional and physical well-being

When you meditate, you may clear away the information overload that builds up every day and contributes to your stress.

The emotional and physical benefits of meditation can include:

- Giving you a new way to look at things that cause stress
- Building skills to manage your stress
- Making you more self-aware
- Focusing on the present
- Reducing negative feelings
- Helping you be more creative
- Helping you be more patient
- Lowering resting heart rate
- Lowering resting blood pressure
- Helping you sleep better

Meditation and illness

Meditation also might help if you have a medical condition. This is most often true if you have a condition that stress makes worse.

A lot of research shows that meditation is good for health. But some experts believe there's not enough research to prove that meditation helps.

With that in mind, some research suggests that meditation may help people manage symptoms of conditions such as:

- Anxiety
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Chronic pain

- Depression
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Sleep problems
- Tension headaches

Be sure to talk to your healthcare professional about the pros and cons of using meditation if you have any of these or other health conditions. Sometimes, meditation might worsen symptoms linked to some mental health conditions.

Meditation doesn't replace medical treatment. But it may help to add it to other treatments.

Meditation is an umbrella term for the many ways to get to a relaxed state. There are many types of meditation and ways to relax that use parts of meditation. All share the same goal of gaining inner peace.

Ways to meditate can include:

Guided meditation: Also called guided imagery or visualization. You form mental images of places or things that help you relax. You use senses like smell, sight, hearing and touch. This may be led by a guide or teacher.

Mantra meditation: You repeat a calming word, thought or phrase to block out unwanted thoughts.

Mindfulness meditation: Based on being mindful or more aware of the present. You may focus on your breath while letting thoughts and feelings pass without judging them.

Qigong: Combines meditation, relaxation, movement and breathing to restore and maintain balance. It is part of Chinese medicine.

Tai chi: A gentle form of Chinese martial arts. It involves slow, graceful movements and deep breathing.

Yoga: A series of postures with controlled breathing that helps build flexibility and calm the mind.

Each type of meditation may include features to help you meditate, depending on the guidance or teaching source. Common features include:

Focused attention: Helps free your mind from distractions. You may focus on an object, image, mantra or breath.

Relaxed breathing: Deep, even-paced breathing using the diaphragm to reduce stress and improve oxygen intake.

A quiet setting: Beginners may benefit from a quiet space. As you progress, you may meditate even in high-stress environments.

A comfortable position: Meditate while sitting, lying, walking, or doing other activities. The goal is comfort and good posture.

Open attitude: Let thoughts pass through your mind without judgment.

Don't worry about meditating the "right" way. You can attend meditation centers or classes with trained instructors, but it's also easy to practice alone. Apps can help too.

Make meditation as formal or informal as you like. Some people meditate for an hour in the morning and evening. Others find just a few minutes a day helpful.

Ways to meditate on your own:

Breathe deeply: Focus entirely on your breath as you inhale and exhale through your nostrils. If your mind wanders, bring your focus back to your breathing.

Scan your body: Focus on each body part and how it feels — pain, warmth, tension or relaxation. Combine this with breathing exercises and imagine breathing into each part of your body.

Repeat a mantra: Choose or create a mantra — religious or not — and repeat it to stay focused.

Walk and meditate: Walk slowly and focus on your steps rather than your destination. Use words like "lifting," "moving" and "placing" to match your foot movements.

Pray: Prayer is a common form of meditation. Use your own words or written prayers. Seek guidance from spiritual leaders if desired.

Read and reflect: Read poetry or sacred texts and reflect on their meaning. Listen to music, journal, or talk with someone about your thoughts.

Focus your love and kindness: Think of others with compassion and kindness. This helps foster connection and emotional warmth.