

Meditation

Meditation offers time for relaxation and heightened awareness in a stressful world where our senses are often dulled. Research suggests that meditation has the potential for more than just temporary stress relief.

For someone who meditates, the practice offers a chance to improve physical wellbeing, as well as emotional health. However, there is no “right way” to meditate, meaning people can explore the different types until they find one that works for them.

1. Love-Kindness Meditation:

Loving-kindness meditation is also known as Metta meditation. Its goal is to cultivate an attitude of love and kindness toward everything, even a person’s enemies and sources of stress.

While breathing deeply, practitioners open their minds to receiving loving kindness. They then send messages of loving kindness to the world, to specific people, or to their loved ones.

In most forms of this meditation, the key is to repeat the message many times, until the practitioner feels an attitude of loving kindness.

Loving-kindness meditation is designed to promote feelings of compassion and loveTrusted Source, both for others and oneself.

This type of meditation may increase positive emotions and has been linked to reduced depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress or PTSD.

2. Body scan or progressive relaxation

Progressive relaxation, sometimes called body scan meditation, is meditation that encourages people to scan their bodies for areas of tension. The goal is to notice tension and to allow it to release.

During a progressive relaxation session, practitioners start at one end of their body, usually their feet, and work through the whole.

Some forms of progressive relaxation require people to tense and then relax muscles. Others encourage a person to visualize a wave, drifting over their body to release tension.

Progressive relaxation can help to promote generalized feelings of calmness and relaxation. It may also help with chronic pain. Because it slowly and steadily relaxes the body, some people use this form of meditation to help them sleep.

3. Breath awareness meditation



Breath awareness is a type of mindful meditation that encourages mindful breathing.

Practitioners breathe slowly and deeply, counting their breaths or otherwise focusing on their breaths. The goal is to focus only on breathing and to ignore other thoughts that enter the mind.

As a form of mindfulness meditation, breath awareness offers many of the same benefits as mindfulness. Those include reduced anxiety, improved concentration, and greater emotional flexibility.

4. Kundalini yoga

Kundalini yoga is a physically active form of meditation that blends movements with deep breathing and mantras. People usually learn from a teacher or do a class. However, someone can learn the poses and mantras at home.

Similarly to other forms of yoga, kundalini yoga can improve physical strength and reduce pain. It may also improve mental health by reducing anxiety and depression.

A 2008 study of veterans with chronic low-back pain, for instance, found that yoga reduced pain, increased energy, and improved overall mental health.

