

MEDITATION FOR BUSY PEOPLE



Discover How To Meditate To Reduce
Stress and Regain Mental Clarity,
Even if You're Strapped For Time

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Meditation is a great way to reconnect with yourself and calm your body and mind. As a result, meditation comes with several benefits that are helpful to your emotional and physical well-being.

Unfortunately, many people believe that meditation takes up too much time and that they are too busy to do a meditation practice. This is a myth. Anyone, even the busiest people, can and should incorporate meditation into their daily routines in order to experience the full benefits of meditation.

In this guide, we want to help you meditate despite your busy schedule. We will begin by looking at meditation and its benefits. Then, we will discover meditation's effects on the mind and body.

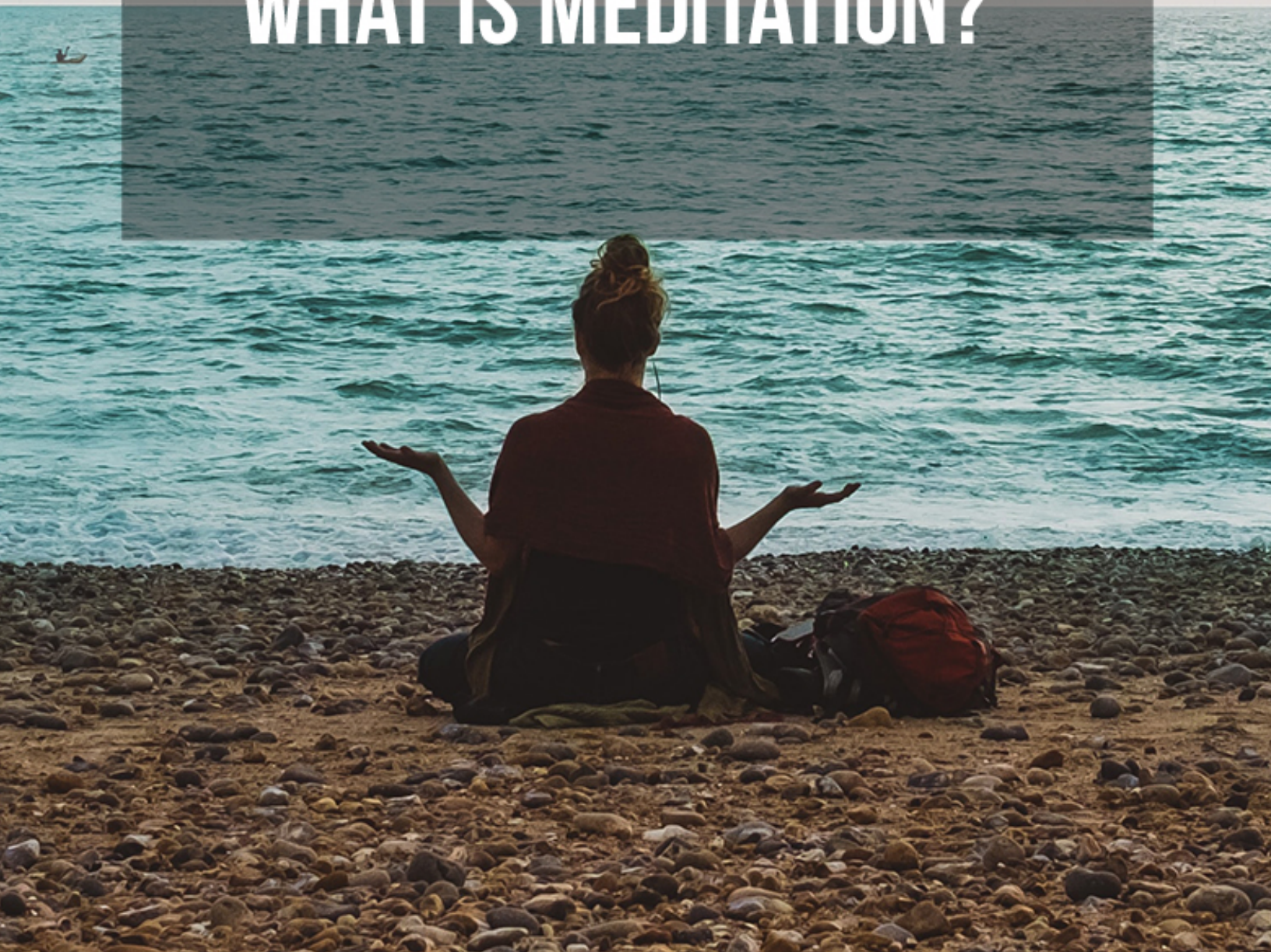
After that, we will go over three meditation techniques for you to try. Lastly, we will help you to create a daily practice that you can use meditation to heal your soul.

After reading this guide, even the busiest person will be able to incorporate meditation into their daily routines and experience the numerous benefits that come with daily meditation.

As you read, we ask you to keep an open mind and pay attention to your reactions. Your reactions will help you to determine the best forms of meditation for your needs and tell you a little about yourself. No matter what, though, stay open to meditation and its possibilities.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS MEDITATION?



WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is loosely defined as a practice used to both train attention and awareness and achieve mental clarity and emotional stability. The practice includes a number of techniques, such as breathing or moving, in order to achieve the goal of heightened attention and emotional stability.

Beyond this loose definition, many scholars have struggled to define the phenomenon more precisely. The reason for this is that meditation comes in several forms and is incorporated differently into religious and non-religious settings. Let's look at what meditation is more closely.

History

Meditation has been [practiced since 1500 BCE](#). The earliest records of meditation are seen in the Hindu traditions of Vedantism, which is a form of Hinduism that still utilizes meditation today. Other forms of early meditation were developed by Taoists in China and Buddhists in India.

Early Jews and Christians also tried meditative practices. Philo of Alexandria and Plotinus are two Jewish and Christian thinkers who specifically wrote about meditation around 20 BCE, but their views were not fully accepted into their respective religions until the Middle Ages.

During the Middle Ages, meditation became more integrated with Western religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Lectio Divina, Kabbalistic practices, and Sufism are just three examples of meditation becoming more intertwined with Western religious faith during the Middle Ages. At the same time, meditative practices were brought to Japan, where they further developed and were integrated into other forms of Buddhism.

It was not until the 19th century that meditation began to transform from a religious ritual to a non-spiritual and health-centred practice. This transition occurred whenever Asian meditation techniques spread to the West.

Once they spread, Western meditators found alternative applications for meditation, causing the already difficult to define practice to be even more difficult to define.

Today, meditation is practiced in both spiritual and non-spiritual settings. People of Indian, East Asian, and Abrahamic faiths, for example, often practice spiritual meditation, while business people and Yoga-class attendees often practice non-spiritual meditation.

In both scenarios, though, meditation is treated as a practice that is used to sharpen the brain's ability to focus and add clarity and stability to the mind and emotions.

Meditation Categories

Since the 19th century, meditation has been divided into two broad categories: focused (or concentrative) meditation and open monitoring (or mindfulness) meditation. Each category has its own benefits and applications.

Focused meditation is when you concentrate on a single thing. Paying attention to the breath, a feeling, a koan, or an affirmation are all concentrative meditation techniques. The benefit of this category is that it sharpens your mind and builds your ability to focus on a single thing.

Open monitoring meditation is when you are mindful of your state and surroundings. The benefit of this category is that you are brought to the

present as your senses are sharpened and made aware of the states around you.

Some meditative practices use both concentrative meditation and open-monitoring meditation, though. Such practices include vipassana and samatha in their meditations.

It is important to emphasize that focused meditation and open monitoring are just categories of meditation. Within both categories, there are countless meditation styles and techniques.

Meditation elements

Meditation includes a number of elements. Though these elements need not be used in every form of meditation, they tend to make meditation practices more effective and helpful, especially for beginners or busy people.

The most important element of meditation is focused attention. Without this element, it is impossible to practice meditation. Focusing your attention allows you to train your mind and escape from distractions. You can focus your attention by closing your eyes, focusing on an object, or reciting an affirmation.

Another important element of meditation is relaxed breathing. Relaxed breathing includes deep, even-paced, and intentional breathing. The purpose of this element is to take in more oxygen, reduce muscle tension, and experience the benefits of enhanced breathing.

Unless you are practicing a rigorous form of meditation, finding a quiet setting is another powerful element of meditation. Quiet settings will allow you to better escape from the distractions and focus your mind. Some

experienced meditators intentionally skip this element so that they can challenge their minds and bodies.

Another optional element of meditation is a comfortable position. Whether you are walking, sitting, or laying down, you should feel comfortable in order to get the most out of your practice. You should never meditate in a position that feels painful, unsafe, or dangerous.

Finally, the last element of meditation is an open attitude. Like the focused attention element, it is impossible to meditate without an open attitude. This element will allow you to practice, challenge yourself, and grow without self-judgment and ridicule.

Meditation tools

As we have learned, there are different types of meditation. One way to distinguish these many techniques is through the use of tools.

The most popularly known meditation tool is postures or asanas. Asanas are used in both spiritual and non-spiritual meditations. They can include yoga postures, walking, or mindfully doing a task. Yoga classes, for example, use asanas as part of their meditative practices.

Another popular meditation tool is prayer beads. Prayer beads are used as tools of devotional meditation in spiritual settings such as Christianity, Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The meditator recites a mantra as each bead is counted and continues this until the entire mala or beaded chain is finished.

Meditation in the modern world

Since its conception in 150 BCE, meditation has changed drastically. Meditation was originally associated with religious thought in India and

China, but it eventually spread to Eastern Asian, Middle Eastern, and European religious practices too.

Once Asian meditative practices were shared with the West, Western traditions began to use meditation for non-religious purposes. As a result, many meditators today are non-religious and practice meditation for its health benefits. Still, a large number of people meditate for religious or spiritual purposes.

Since meditation has developed greatly, there are many types of meditative practices. Most of these practices can be classified as focused meditation or open-monitoring meditation. Within these two categories are countless meditation techniques, some of which use meditative tools like asanas or beads.

No matter the meditation category or type, though, meditation is viewed as a practice to deepen your mind's ability to focus and cause emotional stability and clarity. It incorporates elements like focused attention and an open mind for the betterment of the meditator.

A person is shown from behind, sitting in a meditative lotus position. Their body is semi-transparent, revealing a vibrant, colorful galaxy or nebula within. The background is a soft-focus landscape with a bright, hazy sky and a body of water. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is centered over the upper part of the image, containing the chapter title in white text.

CHAPTER 2

THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Many thinkers and scientists have been captivated by the health benefits of meditation. As a result, a number of studies and tests have been conducted to measure the impact of meditation on a person. These studies have found that meditation causes a number of benefits for both your body and mind.

Reduces stress

Today, many people experience chronic or severe stress, which is very negative to our overall well-being and health. Stress is our body's natural response to tense or dangerous situations. When you find yourself in these situations, your body releases hormones that prepare your natural flight or fight mentality.

Stress can be a good or bad thing, depending on the length of time that stress is experienced. Stress is good in short bursts because it can motivate us to accomplish our goals or finish tasks by their assigned deadlines. Long-term stress, though, is bad for our health because it can cause physical damage to our bodies and mind.

According to a number of [studies](#), meditation is a great way to manage stress because it activates our body's relaxation response. This means that meditation restores the body to a calm state and undoes the effects of stress. As a result, meditation will allow you to manage your stress levels effectively and healthily.

Decreases symptoms of illness

According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), meditation can be helpful if you are living with a medical condition. Anxiety, asthma, cancer, chronic pain, depression, heart disease, high blood pressure, IBS, sleep problems, and tension headaches are just a few of the illnesses that benefit from meditation.

Some researchers believe that meditation helps illnesses because they are exacerbated by stress. If stress is reduced, the symptoms of the illness can be reduced too. Since meditation increases relaxation, it reduces the symptoms of the illness.

Improves heart health

One of the best impacts of meditation on the body is that it improves heart health. According to the [American Heart Association](#), patients who meditated saw a decrease in the thickness of their arterial walls. In contrast, patients who did not meditate experienced no change to their arterial walls.

The thickness of your arterial walls is very important. Thick arterial walls can cause a number of negative health issues such as high blood pressure, obesity, and other heart-related illnesses. If your arterial walls get too thick, they can impact the amount of blood that pumps from the heart, causing a heart attack or stroke.

With meditation, the thickness of the arterial wall decreases, which will allow your heart to pump blood more fluidly and decrease the chances of having a stroke or heart attack.

Decreases muscle tension

Another impact that meditation has on the body is decreasing muscle tension. Muscle tension is when the muscles are not relaxed properly, which often causes sharp pain and difficulty in moving. You may experience muscle tension if you work out intensely, experience severe stress, or take certain medications.

Since meditation often includes controlled breathing and calming the mind, it helps your muscles to relax as well. There is even a meditative technique, called Progressive Muscle Relaxation, that is targeted towards muscle relaxation.

More so, meditation reduces stress, which is a leading cause of muscle tension. If you reduce stress levels, you will also reduce its side effect of severe muscle tension.

Increases metabolism

Meditation also increases metabolism. Although meditation will not cause you to lose a ton of weight, it will help your body to burn off more calories while resting.

The reason for this is that meditation causes an increase of activity in the hypothalamus, the part of the brain that is responsible for controlling your metabolism. If this area is more active, then your body will naturally have a higher metabolism.

Slows the brain aging process

One way that meditation impacts the mind is that it better preserves the brain aging process. The brain aging process is measured by the amount

of grey matter volume in the brain. The more grey matter, the better shape your brain is in in terms of aging.

A [study](#) conducted by UCLA found that long-term meditators had more grey matter volume than those who do not meditate. Younger meditators had more grey matter than older meditators, but older meditators had more grey matter than non-meditators of the same age. This study suggests that meditating slows the brain aging process.

Slowing the brain aging process is a great benefit of meditation. The longer the grey matter is preserved, the better your brain functions for muscle control, sensory perception, emotions, and self-control. So, meditation will allow us to use a well-functioning brain and mind for a longer part of our life.

Improves psychological well-being

Another way that meditation impacts the mind is that it changes the structure of the brain so that you experience an improvement in your psychological well-being. Brain structure is measured by the thickness of the cortical or the brain cell volume.

In a study conducted by [Harvard Univeristy](#), researchers found that eight weeks of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction increases cortical thickness in the hippocampus and in areas that control emotion regulation and self-referential processing. At the same time, it decreases thickness in the amygdala, which controls fear, anxiety, and stress.

As a result, patients of the experiment reported an improvement in the psychological well-being and happiness. In fact, patients reported that they felt less stressed and generally felt better about themselves and their lives.

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