

Benefits of meditation.

Meditation is the skillful means by which you can reduce physical and emotional suffering and increase peace and happiness.

The benefits of meditation lie in its capacity to diminish stress, fear, anger, arrogance, drowsiness, frustration, loneliness, and despair, as well as help heal health problems like high blood pressure and symptoms of chronic pain, psoriasis, premenstrual syndrome, tension headaches, fatigue, and a host of other physical ailments. Other positive benefits of meditation include an increase in happiness, energy, creativity, compassion, kindness, generosity, tolerance, insight, and peace.

Many meditation studies show a positive benefit from using medication in the treatment of chronic illnesses. Fortunately meditation practice has not been associated with any known side-effects and it's easy when you know how. There is no risk in trying to meditate. However meditation doesn't work for everyone because it takes a commitment of time and energy to practice and apply it. Many people just prefer not to go that route.

The expected time needed to realize benefits from meditation varies for different medical problems. If you're treating insomnia that is being caused by not being able to turn off the thinking mind at night, then meditation might start working right away. It would take a much longer meditation practice to transform the theater associated with living with cancer, all to mitigate the pain of chronic arthritis.

However, it is important to understand that meditation is only one of the many possible treatment options, if you suffer from a chronic illness. Meditation can reduce fear and depression, as well as was bring a sense of calm and peace to someone who is suffering from a chronic illness.

Zen Buddhist Teachings and the Three Approaches to Meditation.

Zen Buddhist teachings contain three basic approaches to meditation. All three types of meditation are useful for complete pathway to enlightenment. The first, most fundamental type is called calming meditation. The AH-OM breath meditation is a form of calming meditation. The second meditation technique is the acquisition of meditative insight. This form of meditation can help one gain insight into the root cause of suffering and/or transform negative states of mind. The third approach to meditation, called mindfulness, is practiced while doing normal daily activities.

A single meditation exercise may contain elements of all three types of meditation. Take, for example, walking meditation. Best practice usually eases stress and why the mind. Therefore, it is a type of calming meditation. Walking meditation is also simply mindfulness off walking. Hence, it is the type of mindfulness practice. If you practice walking meditation while reciting the spiritual poem or phrase, it can help generate insight and become a type of insight meditation.

Calming meditation.

Calming meditation relaxes the body and promotes positive mental states such as happiness, peace, and compassion.

Meditative insight.

Here we are talking about the capacity of meditation to produce insight. (This is not to be confused with the hope particular school of meditation called insight meditation, or Vipassana Meditation, which is an offshoot of Theravada Buddhism.) Meditation produces insights that can enable one to transform negative mental states such as anger, jealousy, greed, chronic pain, intolerance, faith, and impatience. Cultivating the wisdom of impermanence, interconnectedness, non-attachment, and compassion can help one, doing meditation, to attain insight into the root causes of one's suffering and how to reduce it.

Once the mind becomes very still, any form of meditation can be associated with spontaneous insight. You can also promote insight by meditatively repeating certain words or phrases.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the type of meditation that can be practiced during normal daily activities. Mindfulness is the practice of concentrating with full attention on what you're currently doing or experiencing from moment to moment. Don't worry about the future or ruminate about the past; just simply dwell in the present, and witness what is happening without being critical or judgmental. However, this doesn't mean you are passive. On the contrary, you are much more alert and alive to what is happening right now. If you train yourself to be mindful doing ordinary daily activities, this will also enable you to reach deeper states of meditation during formal sitting meditation.

Meditation in cancer research studies.

A study of breast cancer patients by Anthony Bakke and Associates from the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, reported in the journal of psychosomatic research (2002), found that guided meditation increase the number of the type of white blood cells that attack growing cancer cells. This experiment studied 25 women with early-stage breast cancer. These women practice at least three times weekly using audiotapes that guided through an exercise of progressive muscle relaxation. They were also asked to visualize their immune cells attacking their cancer. The article describes progressive muscle relaxation as a meditation-like activity: "The purpose of progressive relaxation is to quiet the thoughts and create an inwardly focused state of awareness."