



The Benefits of Meditation

Many people start meditating to manage stress, reduce anxiety, and to cultivate peace of mind.

The benefits are numerous and varied, and are supported by thousands of studies.

Mental benefits of meditation

- Increased awareness and clarity.
- Compassion.
- A sense of calm.
- Improved focus—a single session can reduce mind-wandering by 22%, while four weeks of meditation can increase focus by 14%.
- Meditation eases psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety, and pain related to stress. Those who meditate regularly report an increase in life satisfaction and mental resilience.

Physical effects

- Chronic stress is expressed by the body stimulating its “fight and flight” response, which causes a surge of natural stress hormones.
- High levels of stress hormones can lead to a variety of health issues, including an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes, an increase in blood sugar levels, a suppression of the immune system, and constriction in blood vessels.
- Chronic spikes in stress hormones can lead to an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol levels, disrupting immunity, energy levels, and sleep.
- Meditation helps to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which causes the body to stop releasing stress hormones.
- Ten days of regular meditation are enough to reduce stress levels by at least 12%. After 30 days, stress can be reduced by as much as a third.

Stress reduction

- Regular meditation can help lower blood pressure and heart rate, and increase oxygen consumption, which results in higher energy levels and better immunity and sleep.
- It diminishes the physical symptoms of many health conditions, for example, inflammation, which is linked to stroke, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other serious diseases. Studies show meditation can dampen the genes involved in the inflammatory response and also promote the genes associated with DNA stability.



Emotional benefits

- Meditation helps us to become more capable of coping with negative emotions by viewing them as passing states, thereby changing our mindset and perspective.
- It physically alters our brain, rewiring it towards more positive thoughts and emotions.
- Meditation decreases negative neurological connections to the medial prefrontal cortex—the “me” centre of the brain—dampening traits such as fear, stress, and anxiety.
- It helps build new positive neurological connections to the parts of the brain responsible for promoting traits like focus and decision-making.
- Research shows that grey matter—the area of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, planning, and problem-solving—as well as the cortical thickness—responsible for learning and memory—both increase with regular meditation practice.
- The amygdala, which regulates how we feel stress, fear, and anxiety, responds to meditation by shrinking.
- After three weeks of meditation, participants in one study experienced a 57% reduction in aggression and reactivity to negative feedback.
- After just 10 days of meditation, irritability was reduced by 27%, positive emotions increased by 16%, and compassion rose by 21%.

Tips to starting a morning meditation practice

- Find a comfortable sitting place, such as a chair, sofa, or spot on the floor. Choose the place and time that feels right for you. You know your own morning routine best. Create a way that feels seamless within your day.
- There are hundreds of mediation options, including breathing techniques, body scanning, visualisation, and guided and unguided meditations. Meditations can be as short as one minute or as long as an hour. Guided morning mediation can promote creative thinking and sharpen your focus, which will help promote better decision-making skills throughout the day.
- Unlike the sweat from a workout, you might not notice the benefits of your meditation practice immediately. However subtle shifts in your thoughts, perceptions and reactions are being created, and newfound, sustained energy levels will passively begin to enter your world.
- Making time for meditation at the beginning of the day can help you keep in contact with yourself and encourage positivity by choosing yourself, above all, as a priority.

When we practise being less in our head and more aware of the present moment, we are more able to distance ourselves from negative thoughts and emotions and therefore feel better in the moment.