

The Health Benefits of Meditation

From the medical community to the yoga community, the verdict is out: you need to meditate!

Recent studies from Harvard University found that long-term meditators have increased amounts of gray matter in the insula and sensory regions, and the auditory and sensory cortex.

Wait...what?

Basically, Harvard has confirmed what yogis been teaching for thousands of years:

meditation reduces stress, fosters clear thinking and increases our capacity for empathy and compassion.

Talking about meditation is the easy part; actually creating the space in your day requires a bit of planning. However, when in need of a push to get started (or continue) with your meditation practice, understanding the array of physical, mental, and emotional benefits can be a convincing reminder of why meditation is important. I promise - once you learn how to meditate and make it a daily habit, you will experience the benefits for yourself; you will wonder how you ever existed without your daily ritual of relaxation!

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned practitioner, check out the range of benefits that a regular practice offers:

Physical Benefits of Meditation

When meditating, the body undergoes a structural change, which demonstrates the profound impact of simply sitting down with eyes closed. In fact, MRI images show a complete change in the brain's different departments, which results in a relaxation response in the rest of the body.

When meditating, beta waves, which indicate a state where information is being processed, decrease, and are replaced by alpha waves, which are associated with total brain coherence. The frontal and parietal lobes, which deal with reasoning, planning, and processing sensory information, slow down. And without a glut incoming stimuli, the nervous system is able to rest, resulting in relaxation and improved functioning in the entire body.

On a physical level, meditation:

Lowers high blood pressure

Lowers the levels of blood lactate, reducing anxiety attacks

Decreases tension-related pain, such as, tension headaches, ulcers, insomnia, muscle and joint problems

Increases serotonin production that improves mood and behavior

Improves the immune system

Increases the energy level, as you gain an inner source of energy

Mental Benefits of Meditation

As mentioned before, meditation brings the brainwave patterns into an relaxed alpha state, that relaxes the body as well as the mind. Without constant stimuli entering the sensory pathways,



the mind is able to relax and enter a state of deep rest. Meditation is also a practice of self-care, that allows for a connection with the inner self. In doing so, self-esteem increases and the ability to make decisions that align with the individual's authentic feelings and desires, and allow for better self-regulation. With regular practice of meditation:

Anxiety decreases

Emotional stability improves

Creativity increases

Happiness increases

Intuition develops

Gain clarity and peace of mind

Problems become smaller

Meditation sharpens the mind by increasing focus and expands through relaxation

A sharp mind without expansion causes tension, anger and frustration

An expanded consciousness without sharpness can lead to lack of action/progress

The balance of a sharp mind and an expanded consciousness brings perfection

Other Benefits of Meditation

Emotional steadiness and harmony

Meditation relaxes the entire brain, including the amygdala, which is the emotional center of the brain.

Meditation brings harmony in creation

When you meditate, you enter a space of internal expansiveness, calm, and joy. The result is feelings of expansiveness, calm, and joy in waking life, which has an effect on our interactions with others and the world around us.

Personal Transformation

Meditation can bring about a true personal transformation from the inside out. As you experience your inner storehouse of peace and security, you will naturally begin to discover aspects of yourself that were previously hidden due to stress.

How To Get The Benefits

While there is no doubt that you will feel the benefits of meditation after just one session, in order to experience an integration of the benefits of meditation into daily life, regular practice is necessary. It takes only a few minutes every day, and once made a part of the daily routine, meditation will become the best part of your day!

Think of meditation as a form of hygiene - the mental equivalent of brushing your teeth, as you will. Imagine if you never brushed your teeth - you would like the Geico caveman! When you were young, you had to be trained to create the habit of teeth brushing. However, now that brushing is routine, the thought of not doing it is disgusting! The same goes for meditation - once you get into the habit and experience all of the mental clarity, emotional stability, physical relaxation that the practice offers, not practicing meditation seems unimaginable!

The busier we get, the more important meditation becomes.