

## *What is meditation?*

Meditation is a relaxation technique to achieve inner peace. There are several types of meditation. Although varied, the goal is the same, to achieve inner peace through allowing flow of thought without judgment.

The different types of meditation are below –

- Guided meditation – this meditation uses the senses to visualize and form a mental picture of places or situations that are peaceful, soothing, and relaxing.
- Mantra meditation – a calming word or phrase is used to prevent distracting thoughts
- Mindfulness meditation – develop an increased awareness and acceptance to live in the present moment. Focusing on the meditative experience, thoughts, and emotions are observed and released without judgment.
- Transcendental meditation – a mantra meditation technique that allows your body to rest and relax and the mind can enter inner peace with little effort or concentration

## *Why Mindfulness Meditation?*

As daily living becomes faster, more complex, and more frustrating, we can feel frazzled and disconnected from ourselves and life. Mindfulness meditation can help us reconnect with our inner resources. Mindfulness Meditation is an ancient practice that is both a gentle, yet radical response that can improve our peace of mind and well-being.

It is based on the concept of awareness and paying attention to the present moments, and experiences in a non-judgmental and curious manner. It's a practice that is based on observation and our inclinations to think about the past and future and to gently and softly bring the focus of the mind and body back to the present.

This version of meditation is a powerful tool to support unwinding negative mental patterns. Within the meditation, is a peaceful inner space where you can begin to explore your personal depth and resources.

One of the core concepts of all meditation is to not suppress thoughts or anything that bubbles up. Rather than controlling or eliminating thoughts, thoughts, and images are expected to come up. As they do, the idea behind meditation is that the thought is

gently released without judgment. It's merely a thought, nothing more, nothing less. Emotions and focus give the thought life. By acknowledging the thought and letting it pass through, there's not focus and the thought simply flows through.

### *How Can A Meditation Practice Help Me?*

Mindfulness meditation is designed to help gradually move us from a seeking frame of mind to one of interest and a deepening trust in what is within, what we already know to be us, and what we have known.

Mindfulness meditation is a tool used to reconnect with the wholeness within and to honor ourselves and the simplicity of life. Within it, are opportunities to learn to interact with life through new ways of sensing, understanding, and responding to what life throws at us.

Meditation can bring about both emotional and physical changes. Here are some emotional and physical benefits that meditation can include:

- Becoming aware of new perspectives on situations that cause stress/anxiety
- Developing skills to manage stress
- Increasing self-awareness
- Focusing on the present and releasing the past
- Decreasing negative emotions such as shame, guilt, anger, and fear
- Increasing creativity and imagination
- Increasing tolerance, patience, and an open, understanding mindset
- Lowering the resting heart rate
- Decreasing resting blood pressure
- Improving the quality of sleep

### *What Other Benefits Can I Expect?*

Another benefit of mindfulness meditation is that it helps guide us to reflect upon personal experiences deeply and kindly realizing that we are a part of humanity that feels things the same. We all experience shame, anger, sadness, hurt, pain, fear, and many other negative emotions in similar ways. Personal difficulties are found and felt to be human difficulties and as part of personal healing, it's comforting to know that we

have a commonality with all humans. With this understanding in mind, we're able to share healing with others to develop camaraderie, empathy, and connection. As a human, each of us has strengths and weaknesses and through emotional and physical awareness, we can share human connection.

Body scans or breath practices that bring awareness into the body and mind are common tools for introducing an awareness of being. The practice of being quiet and going inward allows the discovery of inner resources we may not yet be aware of.

### *Pillars of Thought for Mindfulness Meditation*

The practice of mindfulness meditation brings our mind and body is influenced by five individual pillars – attention, attitude, curiosity, kindness, and acceptance. These concepts are used in combination to achieve a non-judgmental, inner peace.

During a meditation practice, the attention is brought to the breath or an awareness made when the mind wanders. Attitude is the mindset that is brought to the thoughts that flow during the meditation. The goal is to be kind to yourself and not criticize or judge yourself for your thoughts. A healthy degree of curiosity lets you see how personal criticism and judgment impact the present experience.

Acceptance is seeing things how they actually are right now without the clouds of emotion. Acceptance does not imply we like a situation, it is simply a recognition of the situation. The most important idea to understand is the emotions and behavior we bring to the situation, determines our experience. By letting go of expectation, self-criticism, and judgment, the situation can be seen as a neutral situation, not as a weakness, threat, or inability. When we react to a neutral situation with negative emotions such as blame, guilt, anger, or fear, rather than respond thoughtfully and constructively, we add unnecessary pain to the experience.

### *What are the components of meditation?*

There are similar components to all forms of meditation.

- Focusing Attention – By focusing attention on an object, mantra, image, or breathing, the mind is free from distractions that cause worry or anxiety.

- Deep, Relaxed Breathing – this type of breathing allows the breath to slow, take in additional oxygen, and helps the body to breathe more efficiently.
- Quiet setting– Exterior quiet promotes interior quiet. Strive to turn off cell phones and reduce exterior noise when beginning meditation. This helps the mind focus on you, not the outside world.
- Comfortable Body Position – Choose a position of your liking, sitting cross-legged, gently reclined, sitting upright, or lying down. If lying down, if possible, choose an area that is not your bed, as the mind associates a bed with sleeping. A position that puts the body into a relaxed state is what you're after.
- Open, Kind Mindset– Allow thoughts to bubble up, and then gently release them without judgment or criticism. Once your mind does this during meditation, it begins to do so while engaged during the day.

### *What is the long-term goal of meditation?*

A meditation practice eventually allows you to experience more calm and peace throughout each situation that crops up in daily life. Unhealthy habits and long-standing painful patterns are handled more adeptly and skillfully as we confront situations with neutrality rather than judgment and criticism. This is the goal of all meditation, inner peace, calmness, a confidence that we can handle and cope with any situation with thoughtful response and behavior.

You'll also learn to find what's true, though not necessarily what's comfortable. Meditation teaches you to be compassionate and kind to yourself no matter what you find within. The destination is all about a continual feeling of opening, lightness, and brightness.