

THE WONDERFUL BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

By Tony Murdock, MA

Meditation is the art of calming the mind and focusing it on an object. In its simplest application, it can be used for relaxation and stress reduction, and bring us to an awareness of the important interconnection between our minds and our bodies. Meditation can help us manage our physical and emotional pain. It gives us a tool to use for coping with the apparent disharmony in our lives.

At a deeper level, meditation can help us to release our emotional blockages and pain. It can help us to face our pain and give us a tool to work through our pain, and bring healing to the heart and body. This healing allows us to open the heart and integrate our spiritual nature with our mind, our emotions and our body.

Meditation can not only be used as a wonderful "wellness" tool to reduce stress and bring about calmness, it can also motivate individuals to live their lives with a more positive attitude, and thereby bring about greater happiness for themselves and their loved ones. As you are aware, a happy life leads to a healthy life.

The right technique, the right instruction and a dedication to practicing the techniques are the keys to success.

Meditation can reduce psychological stress, psychophysical stress and physical stress. Of course proper diet, getting enough exercise...and rest, and having the right attitude towards ourselves and the people who are in our lives, are also essential. However, meditation can help specifically to relax our minds and our bodies, reforming a conscious connection between them. When we 'tune into our bodies' with our mind...and listen to what our bodies are telling us, we have taken an important step toward optimal health.

Often we wait patiently for our weekends, our vacation periods, and our secret mental health days. We leave work and enjoy our recreation activities. Recreation. Re-creation. We go out and re-create who we want to be. Then we go back to work and start the cycle again.

What if our whole life was a never-ending re-creation? When we are calm and relaxed, when we have the right mental attitude, when we are focused and have a good flow of concentration, we perform our work well and effortlessly.

However, if we have an 'off' day, or an 'off' week, or even an 'off' month, when our concentration is not there and our minds are fuzzy, when our physical energy got up and left, (or was never there to begin with), when we view our attitudes at work as various levels of lethargy, we are on a collision course with poor health, or even a break-down.

We need to take care of ourselves first and foremost. Through meditation we can reduce the tension in our lives. Meditation can help us to become calm. It can bring more focus on the present moment (rather than being caught up in past events and worrying about the future). It can help us to stop worrying about issues beyond our control. It can help to let the unimportant things go, the things that can cause stress.

Meditation provided me with the skills to work successfully in the corporate world. Through the practice of relaxation techniques, and the development of concentration and meditation skills, I believe that any sincere practitioner can develop more calmness and peace of mind in their work and in their lives. They will be able to focus on their projects with more skillful attention and awareness. They will not simply survive the day, but 'flow' through the day with an overall sense of well being. This would enhance the mental health of anyone. In my experience, individuals who have started meditating as part of their lifestyle have found that their lives have improved in remarkable ways.

When our mind and emotions are balanced and harmonized, then we have access to our true inner spiritual nature. We begin to have a healthy appreciation for our life and the lives of our loved ones. Our world is seen through new eyes, and we can start to perceive the interconnection and interdependence of all creation.

Here is a simple meditation practice to try.

1. All you have to do is give your self 'permission' to take a few minutes, without any distractions.
2. Sit comfortably, with eyes closed.
3. Now, put your attention on your breathing. Be aware of your breath moving in and out, flowing past the nostrils.

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4. Simply pay attention to the breath. Be aware of your breath as it flows in; be aware of your breath as it flows out.
5. Do not regulate the breath in any way. You are simply observing it.
6. Whenever your mind wanders (and it will), gently bring it back to the breath, moving in, moving out.
7. Observe the thoughts and feelings as they arise, as if they are not your own. Witness them as if you are watching a parade.
8. Within a few minutes, you may start to feel relaxed, or at least begin to regain some composure.

Peace of mind, clarity of thought, **reduction of stress**, and a more positive outlook on life are just some of the early benefits of meditation. Just as regular exercise and regular preventative health care are important to continued health, meditation, practiced faithfully and regularly, will bring about definite improvements to an individual's general physical, mental and spiritual well being.

To learn more about meditation, I recommend the following three web sites: www.themystic.org, www.mysteries.net and www.yogaworld.org.

Tony Murdock has been practicing meditation and studying yoga philosophy and mysticism for the past 32 years. Tony has a Master's degree from McMaster University in Sanskrit and Hindu Religious History, with a minor in Christian Studies. He has released two CDs: Toward Stillness: Guided Meditations for the Beginner; Kali Lila / The Playful Dance of the Divine Mother: Guided Meditations for Inner Transformation; and Toward Health and Wellness: Healing Meditations Developed from the Yoga Tradition.