

How **meditation** helps your brain



Meditation

Meditation is a structured practice where you intentionally focus your attention, often on the breath, a mantra, or bodily sensations. It's usually done in a quiet setting for a set period of time and can take many forms.

The purpose is to train the mind, cultivate qualities such as calmness, clarity, or compassion, and provide a foundation for greater awareness in daily life.

Benefits

Meditation has lots of benefits for both the mind and body. It has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Meditation can also be beneficial for chronic pain and a person's ability to accept their pain. It can also help decrease alcohol and tobacco dependency, as well as help with regulating emotions, and improving quality of life and overall mental health.

On a physical level, meditation can help to lower blood pressure and cortisol (stress hormone) levels. Meditation can also decrease risk of heart attacks and stroke.



How to get started

Getting started with a meditation programme and sticking to it are not always easy. You'll first need a few things: a room or space with little or no distractions, a comfortable position to meditate in, focused attention (focusing on breathing, for example) and an open attitude. All of these things can help you to have a positive meditation experience.

If you are a beginner, you may want to start with a guided meditation that will take you through the process.



A quiet room



A comfortable position



Focused attention



An open mind

Meditation Sources

Anderson, T., Suresh, M. and Farb, N.A. (2019). Meditation benefits and drawbacks: empirical codebook and implications for teaching. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, [online] 3(2), pp.207–220. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41465-018-00119-y>.

Horowitz, S. (2010). Health benefits of meditation: what the newest research shows. *Alternative and Complementary Therapies*, 16(4), pp.223–228. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1089/act.2010.16402>.

Saeed, S.A., Cunningham, K. and Bloch, R.M. (2019). Depression and anxiety disorders: benefits of exercise, yoga, and meditation. *American Family Physician*, [online] 99(10), pp.620–627. Available at:<https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2019/0515/p620.html>.

Wójcik, M., Boreński, G., Poleszak, J., Szabat, P., Szabat, M. and Milanowska, J. (2019). Meditation and its benefits. *Journal of Education, Health and Sport*, [online] 9(9), pp.466–476. Available at: <https://apcz.umk.pl/JEHS/article/view/7424>.