
Meditation

Meditation involves focusing the mind and ignoring distractions. People who meditate claim they have clearer thoughts, calmness and energy. Research suggests that meditation can improve many conditions, including anxiety, migraines, irritable bowel syndrome and PMS. By triggering the relaxation response, meditation reverses the physiological effects of stress, including reducing heart rate, slowing metabolism, slowing digestive system and loosening muscles. Brain waves change to a distinctive alpha pattern that indicates the mind and body are resting deeply, although still mentally alert. It is possible to learn meditation from books tapes or videos but consulting a teacher or joining a group is recommended.

Meditation Techniques:

- **Mantra Meditation**—repetition of a word or phrase in your head
- **Breath Awareness**—focus on breathing and counting “one” or thinking of a word or image that induces a sense of peace each time you exhale
- **Vispassana (Mindfulness)**—enter a state of “diffuse openness” in which you are fully conscious of, but detached from, your immediate experience and thoughts
- **Object Meditation**—focus with eyes open on an object, concentrating on its shape, weight and texture

Main Uses:

- Stress and anxiety
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Fatigue, depression, insomnia
- Pain
- Addictions
- Boosting the immune system
- Personal development