

The Physical Benefits of meditation



There are practices and rituals which, once adopted, can change lives. Meditation is assuredly one of those things. There are many different ways that one could begin meditation - from highly structured to extremely liberal practices. Often, the mental and emotional benefits of meditation are researched and explained. This article explores the physical benefits of meditation and how beginning and maintaining a meditation practice can change your body. Meditation creates a network and chain reaction of benefits that intertwine, therefore, the physical benefits are often linked to non-physical factors and benefits such as in exploring stress reduction.

It seems like stress reduction is the most frequently referenced benefit of meditation as it has been found time and time again to lower stress levels and tension. This creates dramatic changes in the physical body. Less stress could invite relief from clinical anxiety and depression. A regular practice can also relieve burnout and fatigue.

There are actual changes that have been observed in the physical structure of the brain in those who consistently meditate. Within the reactive (fight or flight) part of the brain, neuron density decreases,

complemented by an increase of neuron density in the prefrontal cortex with is connected to emotion regulation and stress management.

One's posture and holding patterns change and alignment is found in the body. The body moves from the triggering of "fight or flight" reactions to a place of better stress management and a "rest and digest" state of being that invites the relaxation response. Essentially your body is able to let go of that tension that comes from constantly being on edge.

This, in turn, can reduce headaches, feelings of breathlessness, tingling in limbs, aching muscles and joint pain. Not only this, a regular meditation practice has been found to improve muscle flexibility, mobility, working memory, eye-hand coordination, reaction speed, strength resistance, stamina and depth perception, making it an ideal prescription for athletes and those with chronic disease.

Organ function is also optimized and may support weight stabilization. As you consistently meditate your blood pressure and heart rate are lowered, blood sugar levels are decreased (lower blood lactate, which is linked to anxiety and cortisol levels), and cholesterol goes down. There is an increase in circulation and blood flow and more effective intake and distribution of oxygen during respiration. This extends to circulation and blood

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flow to the skin which could relieve symptoms of acne. Better body function over-all is going to slow the effects of aging.

Meditation can increase your energy levels. Often, individuals will report the need for less sleep, say they sleep better and are more alert during the day. A short meditation can fill the same role as taking a nap, and may even be better in certain circumstances. Additionally, meditation has been a proven support in treating insomnia. It has allowed those who suffer insomnia to fall asleep faster and rest deeper. This is one of those benefits that is linked to the physical effects. Better body functioning and rest is going to play a part in building and maintaining a heightened immune system that is able to process invasive germs and bacteria. with a more stabilized autonomous nervous system, you could have less colds, or less severe colds as a result of meditation. It is likely that you will experience improved general health.

Meditation increases communication between you and your body. This is extremely valuable and important as this awareness and connection can help you in preventing injuries and feeling imbalances. Illness and other conditions could be detected through a development of this intuition, understanding and connection with your physical body. When an individual becomes more in tune with their body, they may become inclined to care for it differently; more fully seeing the connections

between what you eat and how you feel. Those who meditate report craving less sugar, drink less alcohol, smoke less. Essentially your body does not need the support of these things to feel good, and you will crave them less frequently.

Addiction recovery can be supported with a meditation practice. Recovering addicts who began a practice of meditation reported that they would notice cravings with a greater awareness, better attention management (could redirect cravings, rather than becoming fixated on them), and had an ability to experience cravings without reacting to them. And, coming back to stress: with less stress and better management, cravings and triggers did not arise as frequently.

Meditation has been seen to improve postoperative recovery.

Lastly, for women, maintaining a practice of mindfulness and meditation has been seen to lighten and sometimes dissolve symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. With the increase of serotonin that is often the result of meditation, moods are stabilized, there is less reactivity and behavior becomes more balanced.

Prevents burnout

This work looks at meditation and its possible benefits. Differences between an experimental

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group that practiced meditation for a period of 14 weeks and a control group that did not meditate are analyzed along a number of lines. The mean age of the subjects in the experiment was 24. Most were college juniors. The vast majority of subjects were single, watched television an average of 2.41 hr a day, and had a 2.83 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale). Differences between meditators and non-meditators were found for a number of variables including: feeling upset over the criticism of others, taking tranquilizers or "street" drugs to change mood, and aching muscles and joints. The work supports the idea that meditation is beneficial along a number of lines. Among these subjects, meditators benefited most as regards experiencing fewer symptoms of aching muscles or joints and well as less use of drugs and tranquilizers.

In addition, studies have showed that meditation lowers blood pressure, reduces blood sugar levels, increases circulation and improves mental health. When you begin to practice meditation you will move from the road of chaos to the road of peace.

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