

*“The act of meditation is being spacious.”* —Sogyal Rinpoche

In today’s fast-paced world, it is imperative to make time for restorative activities. Allow yourself to create the balance you need for healthy tissue repair and regeneration. Meditation improves state of mind, physical well-being, quality of life, and self-awareness. For patients with chronic disease, meditation has especially powerful effects. Remaining present and observant under challenging situations can improve the stress response. Strengthening your meditative abilities can also reduce the negative physical effects of stress.

If meditation is supported in the medical literature and has been around for thousands of years, why don’t more people meditate? Time management is the obstacle for many. Setting the time aside to meditate can be challenging when people have many roles and responsibilities. Yet meditation actually improves productivity and mood while promoting health. Even in small doses, meditation changes brainwaves and improves resilience.

#### Health Benefits of Meditation:

- Reduces pain, anxiety, depression, and stress
- Strengthens the immune system
- Improves concentration and creativity
- Decreases pain and blood pressure

Meditation has been practiced by many cultures all over the world to create and sustain a focused, present mental state. **Meditation can be defined as focused, contemplative time.** Usually practiced in a quiet location, meditation changes heart rate, breathing, and cortisol responses. Meditation affects the entire body in a positive way. People meditate while lying down, sitting, or walking, as long as they can achieve a calm and positive state of mind.

It only takes a few minutes a day to improve your health!

#### Get started today:

- **Set aside just three minutes a day.** Many people find it easiest to schedule that time around a common activity like waking up, just after breakfast, at the end of a workday, or just before bed. You can set a quiet tone on your phone or an egg timer to keep track of time.
- **Embrace wherever you are.** You do not need a special place to meditate. You can meditate on the bus, at a park, on your bed, at work, or anywhere else. Just choose a location where you feel comfortable and unlikely to be interrupted.
- **Get comfortable.** You can sit, lie down, stand, or walk—whatever is most comfortable for you in the moment.
- **Take deep breaths.** Focus yourself by breathing deeply. Some people count their breaths, while others prefer to repeat a word to themselves (silently or aloud). Do whatever feels right in the moment.
- **Be kind to yourself.** There is no wrong way to meditate, so be accepting of whatever happens. If you find your mind wandering, bring it back to your breathing and how your body feels.
- **Scan your body.** Pay attention to how you feel, scanning your body from your scalp all the way to your toes. Identify the areas that are relaxed, those that are tense, and how you’re holding your body.

- **Reflect.** After meditating, take a deep breath and think about how you feel. Do you feel different? Is your breathing slower? Are you more relaxed? Check in with yourself.
- **Figure out what works for you.** A rich array of advice can be found about how to meditate. Take only what you find works in your daily routine.

#### Common Obstacles:

- Not enough time—but you only need 5 minutes!
- Don't know how—this document changes that!
- Too stressed out—that's the perfect time to begin!
- Not for me—most human cultures have meditated!

***Make meditation a habit, and the health and wellness benefits will surprise you.***