



Mindfulness Meditation

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The 2024 results of the American Psychiatric Association's annual mental health poll show that U.S. adults are feeling increasingly anxious. In 2024, 43% of adults say they feel more anxious than they did the previous year, up from 37% in 2023 and 32% in 2022. When asked about a list of lifestyle factors potentially impacting mental health, adults most commonly say stress (53%) and sleep (40%) have the biggest impact on their mental health.

Meditation, deep breathing, and mindfulness can be options for reducing high levels of anxiety, stress, and pain associated with chronic medical conditions. Mindfulness practice produces these benefits via the *Relaxation Response* in the brain.



The *Relaxation Response* is meant to counter the "fight or flight" response. Often, the fight or flight response is activated in everyday situations, instead of life-threatening situations. This response will flood the body with stress hormones and over time this can lead to chronic stress, increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, and muscle tension. Therefore, it is valuable to find techniques that can relieve stress and tension.

Ideas to try:

Traditional Meditation: sitting or lying down, closed eyes focusing on breathing and relaxing body.

Guided Meditation: following along with a resource online or YouTube for short or long sessions.

Deep Breathing: focusing on taking deep inhales into belly and expanding lungs.

Journaling: writing down thoughts and feelings can allow for expression.

**Mindfulness Meditation is just one way to decrease stress and increase relaxation. If this interests you, try it - stay consistent and results will follow.*

Things to Remember:

Be Kind to Yourself: mindfulness meditation takes practice and patience.

Your Brain May Wander: it is very common at the beginning of trying mindfulness meditation for your thoughts will wander. That is ok. When you notice your mind is drifting, try to re-focus.

Trust Yourself: trust your feelings and thoughts and know it's ok to make mistakes.

Be Present: try your best not to think about the future, and focus on the current moment.

Let Go: notice there are thoughts, emotions, feelings that you may be holding onto and when you are ready, let them go.

Resources to Get You Started:

Meditation/Mindfulness Apps

Healthy Minds Program
Insight Timer
Medito
Smiling Mind
Plum Village: Zen Meditation

YouTube

Declutter the Mind
Mindful Movement

