

MEDITATION

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Relaxation Rituals

Our bodies and minds have a capacity to create and cultivate a center of calm and peace amid a storm of worries. Just as we are biologically programmed with the fight-flight reaction to handle extreme danger, we also have an internal calming mechanism or response (Barlow, 2002)

Relaxation Rituals

With training and practice we can teach ourselves to access a relaxation response, get centered, gain perspective on our lives, and solve the problems that we are facing with skill and deep understanding (Barlow, 2002).

Relaxation Rituals

Look at regular relaxation time as a necessary self-caring behavior, one that gives you the strength and peace of mind to carry out your other responsibilities and to be there for others in your life.

Jealously guard this time for relaxation and renewal Frisch, 2006. *Quality of Life Therapy*.

Relaxation Rituals

It can be immensely renewing and relaxing to allow yourself to quietly “do nothing” as you relax and meditate for 20 or 30 minutes. Frisch, 2006. *Quality of Life Therapy*.

Relaxation Rituals: Meditation

- Sit erect in a chair with your eyes closed
- Be sure to sit as tall and erect as you can with your shoulders back and your back straight. You usually will not touch the back of your chair.
- Try to sit as perfectly still as possible.

Relaxation Rituals: Meditation

- Gently place your hands on your thighs palms facing upward.
- Concentrate at the point between the eyebrows. Keep your eyes gently focused on this location. If you notice that the concentration drops, gently re-focus your attention.

Relaxation Rituals: Meditation

- Mindful breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Dealing with distractions
- Dealing with worry or fear ☹️
- I am not that !
- What am I ?

Meditation

- Mindful breathing: 8-8-8
- Initially concentrate on the breath as you inhale in through your nostrils (8 seconds), expand your lungs (hold to same count as inhalation) and then completely let out the breath through your mouth (count of 8).

Meditation

- Mindful breathing: 8-8-8
- Mindful breathing is later combined with PMR methods and then the breath is left to flow naturally without any attempt to control it.

Meditation

- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Tense and relax each muscle group in order beginning with your wrists and lower arms. Tense each muscle group for 10 seconds by counting 1-1000, 2-1000, up to 10-1000 to yourself.

Meditation

- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Relax each muscle group for 20 seconds by relaxing the muscles, breathing deeply, and counting 5 “exhales” or exhalations—just say each number—1 to 5—to yourself as you exhale. Try to focus all of your attention on the physical feelings and sensations of tension and relaxation.

Dealing with Distractions

- Do not get upset if worries or thoughts intrude into your mind. Instead of fighting these thoughts, gently refocus your attention.
- Remember, the goal of focused meditation is *single-pointed concentration*.

Dealing with Distractions

- You can concentrate on anything.
- The choice of an object is less important than the ability of the mind to stay focused.
- (Shouler, 2009).

Dealing with Distractions

- If your eyes drop from the point between the eyebrows and you start to fall asleep during the exercise it is a sign that you are overtired and should attempt to meditate at another time.
- It is important to practice meditation a few times before making any judgments about its usefulness.

Dealing with Distractions

- Don't get discouraged when your attention waivers.
- In India (the birthplace of meditation) an analogy is made between a person and their senses and a charioteer controlling horses.

Dealing with Distractions

- The senses are the horses.
- The brain - the reins.
- The mind - the charioteer.
- The soul - the rider.
- The body - the chariot.

Dealing with Distractions

- If the horses are strong and do not obey the reins (brain), or if the charioteer (mind) does not know how to control the horses the chariot will experience grief.
- (Shouler, 2009).

Dealing with Distractions

- “Restless is the mind so strongly controlled by the grip of the senses”
- The Bhagavad-Gita .

Dealing with Worry or Fear ☹️

We accept that old worries, demons, unhealthy urges, and neuroses will revisit us in meditation and we try to greet them with calm.

Dealing with Worry or Fear ☹️

We can ultimately re-channel the energy of strong emotions. We stop demanding perfection in anyone or in any situation and we stop trying to hold, possess, or control life, loved ones, or friends.

Dealing with Worry or Fear ☹️

- I am not that
- Renounce those influences from others or the media that breed unnecessary worry and pain. May I give up and let go of those worries and behavior patterns in myself that just make me miserable in the long run. (Frisch, 2006).

What am I ?

*"Please tell me about this self?. Very well:
Place this salt in water, where is that salt?
Can you see it? No. Can you taste it? Yes.
It is everywhere though we see it not...
You are that, you are that".*

Upanishads

What am I ?

All of reality is one.

*Wave of the sea, dissolve in the sea
I am the wave, I am the sea,
Wave of the sea, dissolve in the sea!
I am the wave, I am the sea.*

Modified from the Bengali Chant of
Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

What am I ?

"Never neglect to do whatever you can for yourself in the form of others."

Paramahansa Yogananda.

Finding Time

- Meditation has been shown to aid the practitioner by improving concentration for all tasks and duties.
- Ten to fifteen minutes a day is sufficient.
- The best time is often just before sleep and or just after waking.

Research

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Meditation comes from the Latin *mederi* "to heal". Meditation is the art of stilling the mind.

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THANK YOU 😊