

HOW MEDITATION CALMS THE MIND AND BODY



Looking to take a stress-reducing break? Whenever we're anxious or stressed, it becomes difficult to let go of certain thought patterns and stay calm. You can attest to this if you've ever found yourself bringing up even more stressful thoughts when feeling stressed. Whenever we're operating in high levels of stress, our bodies are thrown out of balance. The process leads to the release of high levels of cortisol (the primary stress hormone) in the body.

Did you know that you can knock your brain and body out of regular functioning when stress hormones take over? A single, obsessive thought in the mind can cause a reaction that leads to operating in survival mode. If you want to start operating from a calmer and more relaxed state, meditation is a simple practice to adopt. Let's examine how this practice can calm the mind and body.

Meditation Affects Certain Brain Chemicals

If you constantly live with high stress levels, your body constantly releases cortisol. This stress hormone aids survival in the short term, but nobody's body is designed to operate in this state for long. Meditation can help to reduce the release of cortisol in the body. Through this, you can experience less of the body's fight or flight response in situations where not needed. Imagine experiencing a stressful situation such as workload at the office. If you continue to operate from this state by bringing up even more thoughts that stress you out, your body begins to react. Meditation trains and conditions your mind to slow down and stay in the present moment.

As simple as this may sound, the effect of reducing cortisol helps you stay more balanced.

Another calming effect of meditation is its ability to increase the flow of ‘feel-good’ chemicals in the body. Through meditation, you can induce changes in your mood which in turn influences serotonin synthesis. As this feel-good hormone flows, it also improves your mood making this a two-way process [\[1\]](#). Meditation can also boost the sleep hormone, melatonin, which also helps in regulating mood [\[2\]](#). When we operate from happier states, there’s no doubt that we begin to experience calmness in our lives.

Managing Stress

Many people turn to meditation as a way to manage stress in their daily lives. High levels of stress generated from the mind and external environment affect our mental and physical health. Stress can cause headaches, fatigue and muscle tension [\[3\]](#). Since we have a mind-body connection, positive effects in our minds can lead to better health. When you meditate, there’s a relaxing feeling that accompanies the practice. You begin to experience greater levels of mind and body awareness which helps you stay in the present moment. This relaxation response helps in regulating your breathing and heart rate. Studies now even show us that meditation affects brain waves. By focusing on your breath or specific areas in your body, you can access the ability to stay calm.

Altering Brain Wave Frequencies

Our brains always have some levels of electrical activities depending on the state we're in. When we're awake and conscious, we largely operate from the beta range which varies from low to high range. Low range beta is when we're aware of our body and environment but relaxed. On the other hand, high-range beta is an aroused state largely caused by stress. Many of us today are constantly operating in high-range beta which leads to living each day in stress, frustration and anger. Meditation allows us to move to alpha and theta brain wave frequencies, which put us in deeper relaxed states [\[4\]](#). By shifting your attention from the outer world to your inner world, you increase the occurrence of relaxed states.

The Bottom Line

From people sharing their personal experiences to extensive scientific research, we can see the meaningful connection between meditation and calmer states. You have the power to take control by shifting from feelings of frustration to accessing peace. Daily meditation can help you manage stress, alter brain wave frequencies and generally feel good.