

HOW MEDITATION IMPROVES STRESS



Meditation, which is an old age practice, has become one of the popular ways to relieve stress. When you feel stressed and tense, meditating can help calm your mind and body, making the emotional and physical stress melt away. Doing this regularly leaves you refreshed, feeling better, and ready to face your day with a healthy attitude.

Understanding Meditation

Meditation involves “zenning out”. Which means relaxing in a serene environment while clearing or focusing your mind on one thought. Sometimes it may be focusing on a mantra, counting, holding your own breathing, or a sound like “oohmmm,” or nothing at all. The main goal is to get the mind to stop focusing on everything but one thing. It’s advised that you have at least a distraction-free 20 minutes for meditation, though it may last longer than that. You can start with a few minutes and then build it into a habit.

Meditation and Stress

Our bodies react in a “fight or flight” response whenever we are exposed to a threat or sudden stress. This is due to the release of norepinephrine and epinephrine hormones (adrenaline) [\[1\]](#). These hormones cause us to breathe faster, increase pulse rate and blood pressure, and increase blood flow to our muscles. So, when we practice meditation, we oppose the “fight or flight” response by going into a state of deep relaxation where our blood pressure, breathing, pulse rate, and metabolism decrease. Practicing meditation daily helps train our bodies to achieve this state of relaxation, which reduces our everyday stress.

The Result of Meditation

When meditating, there is a physical relaxation that occurs, which reduces stress, and when you practice for long, it can result in long-term resilience. Research shows that people who practice meditation regularly, experience a change in how they respond to stress making it easy for them to recover from stressful situations [\[2\]](#). Focusing on one thought during meditation also helps people redirect their negative thinking patterns, which can help relieve stress.

Things To Consider Before Meditation

Practice

If you're just starting out with meditation, you need to practice more, instead of being concerned about sitting in the right position, how long you should sit, what time you start or which technique to use. Unless you begin, you may not know what technique or position is comfortable for you, so start meditating, the rest will fall into place.

Consistency

You've been told to practice, but you need to be consistent because consistency matters more than practicing for long hours. Every time you practice, you calm your immediate stress, but you will gradually reverse the way your body responds to stress if you do this consistently. So, start with short daily sessions and then move to longer sessions to not feel obligated to meditate.

Wandering Mind

Focusing your thoughts on one thing may be challenging, especially for perfectionists. This may cause you to become frustrated when your mind wanders, which increases your stress level instead of reducing it. So, if your thoughts ever wander, don't panic; instead, redirect the thoughts back to the present moment. Even long-time meditators find it challenging to stay in the present, so it's perfectly normal for your mind to wander.

If you plan to use meditation as stress relief, then you should start practicing when you aren't feeling stressed rather than learning how to meditate when you're overwhelmed. With so many forms of meditation out there, you should find one which you're comfortable practicing and start with that one. Subsequently, you can try other forms of meditation and choose the one that works best for you.