

Meditation

Heal Your Body, Mind and Soul
Through Self-Love and Mindfulness



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When Should You Meditate?

One big question from new meditation practitioners is when they should meditate. Is there a time of day that's better than others? The short answer is to meditate when it works best for you. All of our lives and personal circumstances are different and as a result when, where, and how we meditate will vary greatly.

What works for me may not work well for you. That being said I have some suggestions and guidelines for you. Think of them as a starting point and then figure out what actually works best for you.

Morning Meditations Set The Tone For The Entire Day

Our days are busy and more often than not time gets away from us. This is why most experts recommend establishing new routines or doing things like exercise and meditation in the morning. This way, no matter how crazy the rest of the day gets, you will have had the time and energy to meditate.

That's not the only benefit of meditating early in the day. It also sets the tone for how the remaining hours will unfold. I'm sure

you've experienced this yourself. If you start your day in a stressful and chaotic manner, it tends to stay that way. It's hard to recover from a morning that started with a missed alarm, no coffee to be found, or heading to the car to find that the battery is dead. On the other hand, if you can start your morning in a calm and collective matter, your chances of staying that way throughout the rest of the day are much better. Why not use meditation to set a positive tone for the rest of your day?

Consistency Is Key

More important than the actual time of day is to stay consistent. As human beings, we thrive on routine and it's much easier to both remember and find the energy to actually do something if it happens at about the same time of the day. It becomes part of our daily routine and something we do almost on autopilot. Think about brushing your teeth in the morning. You don't have to think about it or put a reminder on your calendar. You don't agonize about it for fifteen minutes before making yourself go brush your teeth. It's just something you do. You want meditation to become just as integral and automatic and for that to happen it has to become part of your daily routine.

Play around with different times when you first get started and figure out when meditating works best for you. For some, it may be first thing in the morning. For others meditating after everyone else has left the house for work and school may work better. Some people prefer a quick meditation session in the middle of the day or early afternoon when their energy levels drop. And of course, you can also meditate at night, even right before bed. The trick is finding the time that works well for you and your circumstances.

What Does Meditation Have To Do With Your Blood Pressure?

Let's talk about meditation and what it can do for your blood pressure. High blood pressure is becoming a serious and very common issue in first world countries and those that have adopted the "Western diet" throughout the world. For decades, we were told to exercise more and watch our diet. We've reduced our salt intake and have taken blood pressure reducing medication in record numbers. What if there was a better solution that's easy to do and doesn't carry any dangerous or unpleasant side effects. The solution you've been looking for, to lower your blood pressure, may just be meditation.

That's right, something as simple as sitting quietly in a state of thoughtless awareness can help lower your blood pressure and thus aid in the prevention of heart disease and stroke. All it takes on your part is a little bit of time and an open mind. Isn't that worth trying to greatly improve your health and your quality of life?

The pharmaceutical industry is doing its best to suppress the information, but study after study shows that participants who

meditate regularly have lower blood pressure than their non-meditating counterparts. If your blood pressure is getting up there, or you're at a point where you'd like to get off or at least reduce the blood pressure medication you're taking, meditation may be well worth exploring. It goes without saying that if you currently suffer from hypertension, you should consult your physician and should never stop taking your medication without his or her consent and regular supervision. That being said, meditation is something you can do in addition to everything else your doctor has you do or medication that you take right now.

Read up on simple breathing meditations, or follow a guided meditation through a recording or smartphone app. While your blood pressure may lower during your meditation as soon as you get to a point where you can comfortably meditate for a short amount of time, the real benefit is in making this a daily habit. After a few weeks of meditating daily and being able to get into a fairly deep meditative state, you should start to see a drop in your overall blood pressure even when you're not meditating. That's the end goal and one well worth striving toward. While this may not be something you can do quickly, being able to improve your health and reduce medication make the effort well worth it. As an added bonus, you get to experience the other positive "side effects" of regular

meditation including improved focus, concentration, mental clarity, and even an improved immune system.

Using Meditation To Cultivate Mindfulness

We live in busy times. We're constantly bombarded with information at work, at home, and even while we're on the go through mobile devices. We're anxious about the future and worry about what we've done in the past. As a society, we live anywhere but in the present. This lack of mindfulness results in unwanted stress and a constant feeling that we're missing out. Becoming more mindful is the best way to combat these tendencies to live in the past or future and to help eliminate some of the distractions we are subjected to.

At this point, you may be wondering what this mindfulness is all about. It is basically the ability to be fully present and aware of where you are and what you are doing right at this moment. It's about living each moment to its fullest and no longer allowing distractions big or small to constantly interrupt you. Will you be able to be mindful every single moment? Of course not. In fact, most of us spend only a very small amount of time in a true state of mindfulness. The goal is to simply do it more often and for longer periods of time and meditation helps us do just that.

By definition, meditation is a state of thoughtless awareness. Think of it as a workout to get better at being mindful. You actively practice mindfulness while you're meditating. Just like working out your body with exercise, you not only get better at meditating itself, you'll also become more mindful throughout the rest of your day.

There's a very simple way to use meditation to practice mindfulness. Set aside a few minutes each day, five to ten minutes is enough at the start and do a simple breathing meditation. Sit quietly in a comfortable position and focus all your attention and awareness on your breath. It sounds easy, but it won't take long before thoughts come up that are trying to command your attention. Bring yourself back to the sensation of breathing in and out. As you practice this mindfulness meditation daily, you'll get better at tuning out distractions and avoiding other thoughts. Eventually, you'll also be able to meditate for longer stretches of time.

The end goal as I mentioned before is to become more mindful throughout the rest of your life. This will start to happen automatically once you meditate regularly. Pay attention to it and you'll notice that your thoughts are more centered in the present and you no longer sweat the small stuff as much as you

did before. You'll find balance and peace returning to your life and that's a very good thing.

The Health Benefits Of Meditating Regularly

Spending just a few minutes per day meditating can have a bit impact on your overall health and how well you feel. In today's busy world where stress related health issues run rampant, meditating regularly to de-stress and help body and mind relax has become more important than ever. There isn't always a lot we can do to reduce the stress around us, but we can and should counteract it with regular meditation.

It can be incredibly beneficial and is something worth exploring. Don't believe me? Here are just a few of the benefits you can expect to see when you start to make meditation part of your daily routine.

Reduced Heart Rate And Blood Pressure

Most of the western world's major health issues are related to increased heart rate and blood pressure. Heart disease and strokes are among the biggest killers out there and modern medicine struggles to treat both. One of the most effective treatments is meditation. You'll start to see an immediate

effect the first time you meditate and there are cumulative long-term benefits to be gained from regular practice.

Improved Immunity

Stress compromises our immune system. It should come as no surprise then that meditation – one of the most powerful stress busters out there – improves your immunity. People who start meditating regularly report fewer cases of illnesses like cold and flu and improved recovery from when they do become ill or hurt.

Better Focus And Concentration

Meditation doesn't just benefit the body, it also benefits the mind. Think of it as a way to reboot your brain and get it to perform better. As soon as you're done meditating, you'll notice an increase in focus and concentration. As with much of what we're talking about in this post, the benefits of meditation increase as you start making it part of your daily routine.

Reduced Anxiety And Increased Happiness

Anxiety disorders and depression are on the rise. Both are often difficult to treat and require either strong prescription medication with nasty side effects or years of therapy. Meditation has been shown to be beneficial in treating both. Isn't it worth a try before or in addition to exploring other treatment options?

There you have it. Meditating regularly is very beneficial to both body and mind. Isn't it about time you give it a try? Read up on simple breathing meditations or download a meditation app to your phone and start meditating. Once you start to experience some of these benefits for yourself, you'll be hooked.

Meditating With An App

I love it when old traditions mingle with new technology and make it accessible to more people. This is certainly true with meditation apps. They are a very easy and accessible way for anyone to start meditating. If you're curious about giving meditation a try or are looking for a simple way to mix things up and take your guided meditations with you anywhere you go, try downloading one of the popular meditation apps.

Popular Meditation Apps

When you head to the app store for your phone or mobile device, you'll find quite a few popular meditation apps. As with any app, read through the reviews and make sure it's compatible with your device. From there I recommend you start with an app that offers a free trial or a free basic version. Test it out for a few days and see how you like the interface and the guided meditations it offers before you make a small financial commitment. None of the popular apps are very expensive and many offer fresh monthly content for a small fee.

Benefits Of Using An App

There are quite a few good reasons to use an app when it comes to meditating. One thing I've already hinted at is portability. If you're anything like me, you carry your smartphone around with you at all times. With an app on the phone, you'll be ready to meditate anywhere you go. This makes it easy to stick to your meditation habits when you're traveling and are out and about.

Apps also make it easier to get in the habit of meditating regularly. Most meditation apps I've tried will alert you on your phone when it's time to meditate or if you haven't used the app for a certain amount of time. This simple little reminder is often all it takes to get into the habit of meditating daily.

Last but not least, they are fun and keep it interesting with new guided motivations you can try. Not only will this keep you from getting board, mixing things up also helps you get better at meditating. You don't go on autopilot and simply go through the motions. Instead, the apps force you to stretch yourself and get better at meditating by mixing things up and guiding you through longer and longer meditations.

All in all, meditation apps are a good idea. While they may not work for everyone, and there is a cost associated with most of them once you get through the free basic meditations, they are well worth a try. Who knows, it may just be what you need to finally make meditating regularly a habit.