

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The psychological and health benefits of meditation are not being confirmed through research in neuroscience, and with brain imaging technology. Among hundreds of studies, here are four that find a positive connection between meditation and decreased risk of heart attack, stroke and death; increased creativity, ability to manage stress, and ability to process information. Other research points to changes that improve memory, empathy, sense of self and better emotional regulation.
<http://blog.ted.com/2013/01/11/4-scientific-studies-on-how-meditation-can-affect-your-heart-brain-and-creativity/>



IS IT RELIGIOUS?

Though meditation is part of all major religious traditions, it requires no faith or belief in order to be practiced. All that is needed is your self, body and mind, just as you are in the present moment. Awareness itself bring changes in the body, the brain, and the mind. It is a powerful natural resource we are born with and can learn to use to great benefit.



WHICH TECHNIQUES?

Information is abundant but there is no single right or wrong way. The right way is what helps you, and whether you study with books, tapes, with a teacher.

Techniques and teachers provide guidance but in time, meditation empowers you to discover and trust your inherent goodness and innate wisdom.

RESOURCES

Links on Research

- ⇒ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/02/mindfulness-meditation-health_n_1070101.html#slide=309243
- ⇒ http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/28/how-meditation-may-change-the-brain/?_r=0




Links on Non-Religious Meditation Instructions

- ⇒ <http://www.fragrantheart.com/>
- ⇒ <http://www.actionforhappiness.org/takeaction/learn-how-to-meditate>
- ⇒ <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm#research>



A Few of Many Helpful Books

- ⇒ Peme Chodron. *“When Things Fall Apart”*
- ⇒ Thich Nhat Hanh. *“The Miracle of Mindfulness”*
- ⇒ Sally Kempton. *“Meditation for the Love of It”*
- ⇒ OSHO. *“Meditation: the First and Last Freedom”*



A GUIDE TO MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS PRACTICE



Pastoral Care & Education Department



≡ NewYork-Presbyterian

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is a timeless self healing practice that is always available to us. It is our very own awareness, free and ever present in every human being. By relaxing, breathing calmly and bringing attention into the present moment, you can begin to improve the health of your body, your mind and your emotional well being. Even a few minutes a day will begin a bit more calmness and wellbeing.

HOW TO BEGIN

◆ **First and Always:**

RELAX your body.

- ◆ Then allow the breath to settle down into a calm and natural rhythm.
- ◆ Eyes can lose half way or gaze downward.
- ◆ The following are a few time tested and well know techniques you can try out.

1. Mindfulness Meditation

- ◆ Continue as above and just open your awareness to whatever is happening around and in you without judgment or reaction.
- ◆ Mindfulness is about paying attention to what comes up. You become the curious observer of inner and outer reality.

2. Counting the Breath

- ◆ This is a concentration exercise.
- ◆ Count your breaths, inhaling on one, then exhaling on two, and so on up to ten.
- ◆ When your thoughts wander, return again to one.
- ◆ You will need kindness and patience.
- ◆ This is a simple but not so easy way to learn about the willful nature of thought.

3. Mantra Meditation

- ◆ This technique uses repeating sounds, words or phrases that flow with the breath.
- ◆ Here is an example from Meditation Master Thich Nhat Hanh. Use all or any part of this, or make up your own.

*“In, out
Deep, slow
Calm, ease
Smile, release
Present moment,
Wonderful moment”*

4. Walking Meditation

- ◆ While taking a walk, step in rhythm with your breath and enjoy the sensations of each step, your moving body, and the refreshment of full breathing.

