How Does Meditation Impact Depression?

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Meditation and Depression

Meditation is simply the act of taking the time to pause and focus your attention inward. Dictionary.com defines it as continued or extended thought; reflection; contemplation.

Meditation can be practiced in groups or individually. Practicing meditation doesn't have to mean sitting in a room in silence; it can be enjoyed outdoors as well! Simply taking the time to enjoy the moment and concentrate on gratitude and positivity is a step in the right direction.

If you wish to practice meditating with a purpose or intention to get greater benefits it may be best to use guided meditations. Guided meditation is also an excellent way to get started for beginners as it literally guides you through the steps to take to get you into a calm and relaxed state of mind.

History of Meditation

The precise origin of meditation is hard to pinpoint, as it dates back far before civilization as we know it. It has been practiced in many religions throughout the world, with Buddhism and Hinduism being the most common. It was primarily practiced in Eastern cultures and was only introduced to the western world in the mid 20th century. Meditation in modern society isn't only a religious practice but is now also used as a relaxation method as well as in self-healing and inner reflection outside of religion.

Benefits of Meditation

The physical and mental benefits of meditation are raved about across the medical field from naturopaths to therapists and family doctors. The physical benefits primarily are natural effects of relaxation and decreased stress on the mind and body. This can be a huge help those suffering from depression as it will not only help with some of the physical pain but it has been known to assist in mood stabilization and focus as well.

Next page: physical and mental benefits of meditation and how to get started.

Benefits of Meditation

Some Physical Benefits Include:

- Lowers blood pressure
- Decreases stress-related pain such as tension headaches and stiff muscles
- Boosts immune function
- Increases natural serotonin levels to assist in mood stabilization

Some Mental Benefits Include:

- Anxiety and stress decrease
- Helps memory and focus through relaxation and focus
- Happiness and creativity come easier
- Emotional stability improves

How To Get Started

Guided meditation is probably the easiest way to start for beginners. It's a wonderful introduction into learning to focus on your breath as well as the process of how certain meditations work. Guided meditations often start off by asking you to find a comfortable position where you can focus without any outside distractions. This will allow you to direct your focus inward, and start to settle into that relaxed state. It's okay if you fall asleep! If you're worried about timing or being asleep for too long you may need to set an alarm just in case. If you do fall asleep the relaxed feeling from your meditation can carry through to your sleep and you should wake up feeling rested, relaxed, and more positive. Be patient with yourself and the process, as with any new practice it will take time to master but you should notice some immediate effects.

I recommend trying out a few different versions recorded by different people to get a feel for what works for you. There are quite a few guided meditations available on YouTube as well as different CDs that can be purchased online; I've even found a few apps that have been helpful as well! If you want a more detailed introduction, you may find it helpful to look up meditation coaches or yoga studios in your area that could provide you with a more in-depth experience.

Conclusion

Meditation has endless benefits for those who practice, especially for those suffering from depression. A decrease in stress and anxiety as well as an increase in natural serotonin help to increase energy and stabilize mood. Getting started with meditation is fairly easy as there are lots of options available online and through apps so you can bring that feeling of calm wherever you go.