Can Meditation Help Depression?

by JANE BRASIL

Meditation for Depression

It has long been known that meditation can help reduce anxiety and stress. It can help to relax the mind and allow us to take a mental break that positively replenishes us.

Studies have shown that the average person can experience 50,000 to 70,000 thoughts in just one day.

Our thoughts can be pleasant, positive, loving, and intelligent to mention just a few. Positive thoughts can help us create a sense of wellbeing within ourselves and as a result, bring out the best in us.

We all can struggle with negative and unpleasant thoughts. It is just the way our mind functions. It is a normal process.

Simple forms of meditation can help alleviate our negative thoughts and quiet our mind. For those of us who are experiencing mild to moderate depression, meditation can help to relieve the buildup of significant stress factors in our lives.

Does Meditation for Depression Have Any Benefits?

Although any form of meditation can be beneficial, it is a significant challenge for those of us who are experiencing any type of clinical depression.

Meditation can be a valuable component and tool in our quest for recovery, and it is not a replacement for medication or therapy, but rather another form of positive reinforcement that can become essential to improving our mental health.

Two of the most prominent symptoms of depression is the presence of continuous negative and self-defeating thoughts.

Unfortunately, when we are struggling with depression, we cannot think positively. We have little or no control over our thoughts. It does not matter if we are normally positive and happy people. We ruminate continuously and are unable to quiet our mind. We have little or no energy, and our motivation is non- existent. It is not who we are. It is the illness.

We become paralyzed emotionally and become stuck on a merry go round of sad and painfully negative thoughts. Even though many of these thoughts are not based in reality, our depressive illness creates a monologue within ourselves that tell us our feelings are fact. We blame ourselves for everything that is wrong.

Even though tragic and sad events can affect our mental outlook, it is not necessarily the events in themselves that cause us emotional pain and negativity. It is rather our interpretation of what we are experiencing.

The Different Types of Meditation for Depression

There are many different ways and tools to help you practice meditation. If you are suffering from a major clinical depressive episode it might be wise to ask your therapist to suggest the best type of meditation for you to start with.

Guided Audio Meditation

Listening to audio meditations and meditation music can be less intimidating. All we have to do is listen. Whether lying in bed or sitting in a chair motionless and lethargic, it is an easy way to start helping yourself.

Listening to meditation does not require any effort. The goal is simply to change the station in our mind to a different frequency. We need to stop the static and replace it with something gentle and soothing.

Recovering from major depression can take anywhere from six weeks to several months. It is a slow healing process.

Meditation of any kind can help to speed up our recovery from depression. Little changes in our attitude or energy levels can show us that we are making progress and gives up hope that we will eventually recover and feel like ourselves again.

Loving Kindness Meditation

Sometimes called Metta meditation, it’s goal is to cultivate a feeling of love and kindness toward everyone, even those who have caused us emotional or physical pain.

Loving Kindness meditation teaches us to breathe deeply while helping to promote feelings of love and compassion not only to other people but to ourselves as well.

We learn how to send kind and loving messages to the world. We can send specific messages of love to people who have touched our lives or are having difficulties.

Body Scan or Progressive Relaxation

This type of meditation helps us to locate areas of tension and stress in our bodies. It navigates us through each part of the body starting at one end and helps us to release the tension in each area.

The goal is to reach total body relaxation. When we are in a state of depression, our mind is constantly agitated. Body scan relaxation can be a huge help in starting the healing process of our illness as it relaxes our center.

Mindfulness Meditation

This type of meditation requires us to remain present in the moment and become aware of our current surroundings. It encourages us to not dwell on the past or the future.

We learn to pull our thoughts away from outside influences and negative thoughts and instead focus on our breathing while we still our mind.

Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini yoga is a physical form of meditation that is typically done in a class where students are taught how to blend movements with deep breathing techniques while saying mantras.

Once the poses and mantras are learned, they can easily be done at home. This is a form of meditation that improves physical strength and overall well-being.

Meditation is Another Valuable Tool for Relieving Anxiety and Depression

These are just a few of the many types of meditation that can help someone dealing with mild to moderate depression or anxiety.

Once we are on the way to recovering from an episode of depression, it would be beneficial to continue to meditate on a daily basis to help us to stay in a positive frame of mind.