

Fitness Tips: Meditate And Practice Breathing



By [Jessica Gomez](#)

Meditation is a technique where deep breathing is used to clear your mind and relax you. It's something that we can all benefit from. People who believe in meditation usually meditate anywhere from five to 30 minutes a day. If you're just starting out, you can begin with five minutes and gradually increase the time. There are many different types of meditation and ways to go about it, so it's important to do research before you start practicing.

Meditating is a great [fitness tip](#) due to the positive effects it has on the mind and body. Here are several healthy benefits:

Meditation consists of regular deep breathing and specific breathing practices. This is what contributes to the following beneficial effects:

1. Reduces stress: When our bodies experience stress or threat, they respond with a “fight or flight” response. The adrenaline rush we endure increases blood pressure and pulse rate, and produces faster breathing and increased blood flow to the muscles. When we meditate, it produces a relaxation response, which is the exact opposite from the “fight or flight” response – a state of deep relaxation where our breathing, pulse rate, blood pressure and metabolism are decreased.

2. Promotes emotional health: A study in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science* noted that there are several benefits of mindfulness on symptoms of anxiety and depression and its ability to improve sleep patterns. It points out, “Compared with novices, expert meditators’ brain activity diminished in anxiety-related regions – the insular cortex and the amygdala – in the period preceding the painful stimulus.”

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3. Slows aging: A small and growing body of evidence suggests that regular meditation can indeed slow aging, at least at a cellular level, according to an article in *The Guardian*. A study published last month found that long-term meditators had a reduced inflammatory and stress response to psychological

and chemical stressors in the lab compared with a control group. This would seem to mean that if we counter the effects of stress with meditation, we can indirectly slow cellular aging.

4. Can decrease blood pressure: Meditation techniques appear to produce small yet meaningful reductions in blood pressure either as monotherapy or in conjunction with traditional pharmacotherapy. Transcendental meditation and mindfulness-based stress reduction may produce clinically significant reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure. What a great natural way to achieve what most use medicines to treat!

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5. Good for your immune system: Since your immune system responds to both negative and positive thoughts, meditation creates a positive mental environment for the immune system to flourish. A study from ScienceDirect showed a reduction of pro-inflammatory gene expression in older adults.

What are some other things that meditation can help with? Share your thoughts below.