

The Power of Meditation

If you sometimes feel overwhelmed or distracted, meditation may help.

Meditation is a useful tool for managing stress, improving relaxation, and increasing resilience. It may also help with managing pain and benefit your overall health and wellbeing.

There are several different forms of meditation. Some common ones include:

- ▶ **Mindfulness:** Focus on a physical sensation (such as inhaling and exhaling). When thoughts intrude, return focus to your breathing.
- ▶ **Relaxation response:** Progressively relax your body. Then, focus on a word or sound.
- ▶ **Visualization:** Visualize and then maintain focus on a specific place or situation (such as a beach or mountain).

Although meditation sounds simple, it takes discipline to hold still, block out the world around you, and quiet your thoughts. While short bouts of meditation may be helpful in managing a stressful situation, practicing at least 20 minutes a day will increase its benefit. With practice, the peaceful feelings meditation provides may linger throughout the day, making it easier to manage stress, conflict, and difficult situations.

If you are new to meditation, start with this simple mindfulness exercise:

- ▶ Go to a quiet place. Sit in a chair or on the floor.
- ▶ Focus on the sensation of air moving in and out of your body as you breathe. Feel your belly rise and fall and the air enter your nostrils and leave your mouth.
- ▶ Take note of any words or images that come to mind, then let them go. Focus on your breathing.
- ▶ When the meditation is over, gradually allow yourself to become more aware of your surroundings. Don't get up until you feel ready to do so.

For more suggestions on how to incorporate meditation into your daily routine, contact LifeMatters. Help is available 24/7/365.




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