

Importance of meditation

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What is meditation and what is it intended to accomplish? If you go to your doctor for stress-related problems, she or he will likely tell you that perhaps the best treatment for stress is Meditation. So what is meditation? The word “ meditation”, is derived from two Latin words: meditari (to think, to dwell upon, to exercise the mind) and mederi (to heal). Its Sanskrit derivation 'medha' means wisdom. Meditation is a group of techniques that induce an altered state of focused attention and heightened awareness.

Many years ago meditation was considered something just not meant for modern people, but now it has become very popular with all types of people. Published scientific and medical evidence has proved its benefits, but it still needs to be much understood. Various types of meditation that are recognized include transcendental meditation, prayer, Zen meditation, Taoist meditation, mindfulness meditation, and Buddhist meditation. Some methods of meditation may require the body being absolutely still or to be moved with controlled deliberation, while other types allow for free movement of the body.

While the methods are different, the end goal of all types of meditation leads to a mind that is quieted, purified, and free from stress by the use of quiet contemplation and reflection. Meditation Categories. There are two general categories of meditation. Concentration techniques involve focusing awareness on a visual image, your breathing, a word, or a phrase. When a sound is used, it is typically a short word or a religious phrase, called a mantra, that is repeated mentally.

The other one, called Opening-up techniques, involve a present-centered awareness of the passing moment, without mental judgment (Tart, 1994).

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Rather than concentrating on an object, sound, or activity, the meditator engages in quite awareness of the “ here and now” without distracting thoughts. The zazen, or “ just sitting”, technique of Zen Buddhism is a form of opening-up meditation. Effects of Meditation. Effects of meditation include physical, psychological, and spiritual effects.

Some of physical effects include: Stabilizing blood pressure; lowering heart rate and respiratory rate; reducing stress hormones; improving mental functioning; improving brain wave coherence; improving the strength of the immune system. Some of psychological effects include: decreasing stress, anxiety, and depression; increasing joy of living; increasing positive emotions & attitude; increasing self-confidence; and increasing spiritual awareness. The spiritual effects of meditation include growing compassion; decreased sense of ego; unitive consciousness; self-realization and enlightenment.