

Meditation

To be mindful is to be aware of what is happening in the present moment. Focused attention meditation cultivates mindfulness and promotes greater self-awareness. Likewise, mindfulness practises - such as paying attention to the body, to ambient sounds, to inner thoughts and emotions, eating mindfully can be an excellent preparation for silent, focused- attention meditation.

The Origins and Benefits of Mediation:

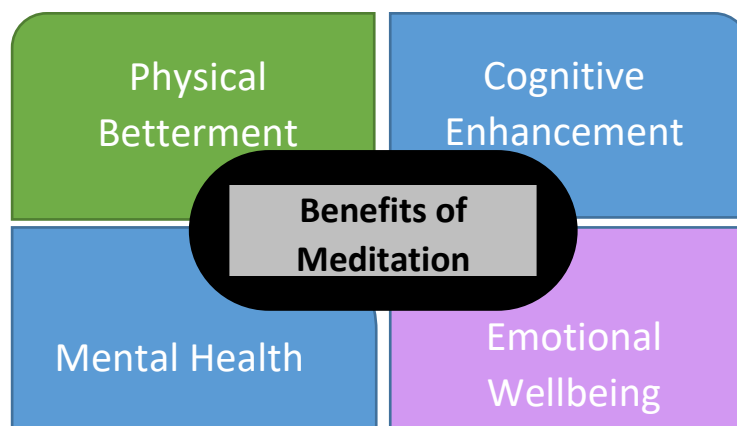
- ✓ Helps you let go of all the drama
- ✓ Calms and restores you
- ✓ Generates energy and confidence
- ✓ Helps you make better decisions

Practical Benefits of Meditation

A lot of work has gone into research about meditation and the brain. Scientists across the world have researched in considerable detail and concluded that practises such as meditation impact positively on measurable health outcomes. There is a growing body of evidence, especially since the turn of the millennium that 'points towards the benefit of regular meditation and the role that it plays in enhancing human performance and maintaining good health and well-being'. Research on adults and young people, has shown the pragmatic benefits of meditation and mindfulness practices on reducing distress, enhancing general well-being and impacting positively on basic brain function and habits of the mind. In brief, meditation gives the sense of calm, peace and balance that benefits both overall health and emotional wellbeing. These benefits arise whether meditation is practised from a secular or spiritual perspective. The practise is even more powerful when it operates within the context of a 'person's deepest religious or philosophical convictions'.

The practical, pragmatic benefits of meditation identified by such scientific research- for adults and young people can be summarised under four key headings, as indicated in the diagram below.

In other words, Meditation benefits - Physical and Mental Health, enhance Emotional Wellbeing and improves Cognitive Function.



Positive Effects on Physical Health include:

- Reduced blood pressure
- A positive impact on cholesterol levels
- Reduced cortisol levels
- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Improved immune function
- Improved skin clearing in psoriasis
- Symptom relief in irritable bowel syndrome
- Improved glycaemic control in diabetes
- Improved symptoms in heart disease
- Symptom control in patients with fibromyalgia

Meditation seems to help mental health by optimising brain function. It also leads to:

- Improved decision making
- Improvements in problem solving skills
- Better coping strategies
- A more positive attitude towards perceived stress
- A decreased tendency to self-reference
- A heightened sense of emotional well being
- Enhanced openness
- Improved self esteem
- Greater emotional stability
- Greater capacity for enjoying life
- Improved cognitive function
- Improved attention and greater focus on the present moment
- Better reasoning, creativity and problem solving

