

## MEDITATION/RELAXATION EXERCISES

Dr. PARMJIT SINGH

For detailed understanding  
of Meditation, click here.

### Scientific Definition of Meditation in Practice

- ↘ Steady transformation of mind through consistent observation.
- ↘ Cultivation of mindfulness awareness.
- ↘ Curbing the seamless chatter in mind and tapping into the powerful intelligence of mental, physical and spiritual connection.
- ↘ Psychological intervention designed to modify learned negative behavior.
- ↘ An internal revolution full of joy and calmness.

#### ➡ Benefits of Practice:

- ↘ Meditation offers a welcome relief from thought pollution and sensory overload.
- ↘ It might help person arrive at more integrative statement of awareness in everyday life, by mechanism that changes integrative processes in brain.
- ↘ It is a very powerful therapeutic tool, which promotes health and quality of life even in terminally ill patients.
- ↘ Constant observation allows one to know what 'stuff' one is made of.
- ↘ It helps to instill a sense of peace and happiness and gradually alters the outlook toward life.

### ✧ Recommendation for Starting/Doing Meditation ✧

- ↘ **Be playful**
  - ↳ Learn to laugh and do meditation in a playful manner.
  - ↳ Do not make it a serious business except being disciplined.
  - ↳ It is enjoyable and pleasurable pursuit.
- ↘ **Do not expect quick results**
  - ↳ Be patient. Expecting quick results hampers the growth.
- ↘ **Use enough space for practice**
  - ↳ Stay away from physical clutter.
  - ↳ Earmark a spot for practice.
- ↘ **Choose a right place and time to practice**
  - ↳ Use a congenial spot to meditate.
  - ↳ Try to practice at same time each day.
- ↘ **Assume comfortable posture**
  - ↳ Do not get caught in postures.
  - ↳ You do not have to slip into a Lotus pose for reaping benefits of meditation.
  - ↳ Just keep your head and torso erect and in straight line.
- ↘ **Begin with light physical exercise or catharsis**
  - ↳ Do a short exercise or dance.
  - ↳ Catharsis helps to eliminate initial negative feelings.

## ✧ RELAXATION EXERCISES ✧

### Self-Body Scan

This is powerful method to neutralize constant stress we experience. By engaging in the following exercise either at work or at home can definitely reduce the stress.

- ↳ Sit comfortably on a chair or lie down. Loosen up your shoes.
- ↳ Let your body be comfortable with your hands lying in your lap (if sitting) or beside your body, if lying down.
- ↳ Gently close your eyes and try to breathe in and out through the nose. ≈
- ↳ Breathe into the lowest part of stomach. Establish a comfortable breathing cycle. Try to make your breathing as deep as possible without straining your lungs.
- ↳ Once you feel relaxed, scan your body using your mind's eye starting from the scalp down to the toes and look for any specific stress spots where tension is accumulated. Pay attention to your face, neck and shoulder muscles. These are the areas where the likelihood of stress accumulation is higher.
- ↳ Once you have located the stress spots, focus your breath on it. Each time you breathe out, imagine you are throwing the accumulated tension from that spot. You can visualize a dark cloud flowing out of your nose when you breathe out. Do this five times or more until you feel completely relaxed at that spot. Then move over to the next sore spot.
- ↳ By using this method, cleanse your whole body from excessive stress. Once you have accomplished this, quickly scan your body once again from head to toes and release any remaining tension. Do it for 10-15 minutes.
- ↳ At this stage, your body should feel relaxed and mind should be refreshed.

**Benefits:** Reduction of stress, tension, blood pressure, fatigue, headache, body pains, and nervousness. Enhancement of joy, happiness, concentration, immune function and a sense of well-being.

≈ *Breathing correctly is the hallmark of yogic and meditation practices. Different parts of nervous system are activated when we breathe through nose or mouth. Breathing through nose stimulates parasympathetic nervous system thereby inducing a sense of relaxation while mouth-breathing activates sympathetic nervous system responsible for activating stress response. Prolonged out-breath also reduces activity in amygdale of our brain.*

### Full Yogic Breath

Full Yogic breath is a very powerful tool for inducing deep relaxation and initiating internal healing process. and the most important prerequisite for the regulation of breathing is to control its rhythm. Count your pulse beats to understand your personal rhythm and then use these pulse-counts to follow the prescribed breathing patterns. The complete Yogi breathing consists of three individual parts: *abdominal, middle, and upper breathing*. When these three elements are fused together in a single breath, they constitute a **Complete or Yogic breath**. Follow the instructions to practice these important exercises:

**1 Abdominal breathing:** While standing, sitting or lying down, direct your consciousness at the naval. With exhalation, we draw in the abdominal wall and then start breathing in slowly through the nose while relaxing the diaphragm. The abdominal wall arches out and the lower part of the lungs is filled with air. To exhale properly, draw in the abdominal wall tightly thereby forcing the air out. In this manner, only the lower lobes of the lungs are filled with fresh air while the chest remains motionless giving rise to a wave-like motion of inhalation and exhalation.

➡ **Benefits:** Induces profound relaxation for the heart, reduces high blood pressure, stimulates digestive process, and regulates intestinal activity.

**2 Middle (chest) Breathing:** While standing, sitting or lying down, direct your consciousness at your ribs. After exhaling, inhale deeply through nose expanding the ribs at both sides. To exhale, contract your ribs and force the air out of your lungs. In this type of breathing, only the middle or the chest part of the lungs is filled with air and the abdomen and shoulders remain uninvolved.

► **Benefits:** Takes pressure off the heart and provides fresh supply of blood to liver, gall bladder, stomach, spleen and kidneys.

**3 Upper Breathing:** In this exercise, we bring our attention to the upper part of lungs. After exhaling, we inhale deeply through nose while lifting our collar bones and shoulders up and letting air flow into the upper part of lungs. To exhale, we slowly lower down the shoulders and collar bone and gently force the air out from lungs. *Inhale and exhale only through nose unless there are problems in breathing.* The abdomen and the middle part of chest remains motionless or uninvolved in the whole process of the inhalation and exhalation.

► **Benefits:** This breathing pattern strengthens the hilar lymph nodes in the lungs and thoroughly nourishes the tips the lungs.

Once you have mastered all these three components individually, practice these three in one breath. **Here is how you execute a Full Yogic breath:**

Exhale completely and while inhaling, force air into the lowest part of the stomach, then fill up the middle part by expanding the ribs and complete the breath by raising shoulders and collar bone. Practice according to a comfortable rhythm only. Normally, inhale through the count of seven, hold your breath for seven counts and then exhale using the same method. However, *do not strain your lungs* while trying to accomplish this. Always find a comfortable level to start with and then move onto the difficult level. *Learn to understand the rhythm of your own body and let it help you fashion your practice schedule.*

## ✧ MEDITATION EXERCISES ✧

### Sleep-inducing meditation

Insomnia is a common problem amongst individuals these days. While there are powerful drugs available for inducing sleep yet nothing is comparable to a natural sleep. We should know that our body is a perfect pharmacy. So why not stimulate the sleep in natural manner without having to rely on medicines.

Lie down on your bed and gently close your eyes. Allow your breathing to be deep and slow by gradually manipulating the breathing pattern. Focus on your breath and **let go of the idea of sleeping**. Remember when we try hard to sleep that is when we do not fall asleep so easily. Follow your breath- in and out. Entertain any thoughts that intrude into your mind and then let them go. You are just being a spectator, just watching yourself and no judgment is being passed. When your mind goes astray, bring it back to your breath. After a while you will be able to get into a deep state of relaxation and will be able to sleep soundly.

► **Benefits:** Proper sleep is pre-requisite for our well-being and health. In October 2003 issue of *Brain, Behavior and Immunity*, the researchers David Spiegel of Stanford University, USA and his colleagues have shown that a good sleep can beat cancer.

### Mindful Eating

Research on mindfulness (being aware of whatever we do) is sufficiently convincing that being aware of our daily life rather than being a robot is much more healthy and productive. It improves our cognitive functions (thinking, memory etc.), reverses age-related deterioration of bodily functions (gait, strength, memory, blood pressure etc.) and fine-tunes our emotions. This type of training can be practiced in any conceivable form. You may practice it while walking (Mindful walking), talking to your friend or listening to

your favorite music (Mindful Listening), driving (Mindful driving), or even eating (Mindful Eating). Engaging in this practice while traveling could be a wonderful opportunity to train our mindfulness. Following is the simple method to practice mindful eating:

- Get into a relaxed mood after practicing body-scan or breathing exercises as described above.
- When the food arrives, look at it intently and savor its aroma.
- Look at its texture or shape (e.g. bread roll or a fruit salad).
- Fight the temptation to eat hastily.
- Chew each bite at least 20-30 times before swallowing. Enjoy the feel of food in mouth.
- Take at least 45 minutes to finish your meal.
- During eating, DO NOT TALK. Just focus exclusively on eating.

➤ **Benefits:** Body weight is controlled; attentiveness, concentration, and memory are improved. This exercise is good for being aware of the body.

### Letting Go Emotional Burdens

Most of us carry emotional burden around our necks even during pleasure traveling and this potentially can prevent us from enjoyment. Letting go is a chance to say adieu to those negatives experiences and start afresh once again. Carol Castaneda rightly puts it, "We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same." Letting go helps us in the latter.

Sit or lie down comfortably where there are fewer distractions. Relax your breathing, feel the breeze on your face, birds chirping or whatever nature has to offer you around. Let your senses be awake, alive and receptive. Once you feel comfortably relaxed and free, focus your mind on the entire burden you are carrying and let it go. Set it free.

➤ **Benefits:** This exercise helps us to deal with our past regrets, guilt feelings, toxic emotions and tend to bolster our self-esteem. Letting go of emotional burden helps us in maintaining health and wellbeing

To return to main website click [Here](#) and to send us your feedback or comments click [Here](#).