

# 5 MEDITATION

That Can Help Fight Depression



The ancient practice of meditation used for centuries in India and China—now shows promise as a treatment in the toolbox for depression.

## Loving-kindness meditation



- Sit comfortably, close your eyes, relax your muscles, and take a few deep breaths.
- Imagine feeling perfect love for yourself, thanking yourself for all that you are, knowing that you are just right—just as you are. Focus and imagine that you are breathing out tension and breathing in feelings of love.
- Repeat three or four positive, reassuring phrases to yourself.
- Bask in feelings of warmth and self-compassion for a few moments. If your attention drifts, gently redirect it back to these feelings of loving kindness. Let these feelings envelop you.

## Mindfulness meditation



- Take a cushion cross your legs and sit on it.
- Straighten up but don't stiffen your upper body. Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Then let your hands drop onto the tops of your legs. With your upper arms at your sides, your hands will land in the right spot. Too far forward will make you hunch, too far back will make you stiff. You're tuning the strings of your body – not too tight and not too loose.

- Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently down wards and lower your eye lids. Be there for a few moment and relax.

## Breath awareness meditation



- Find a comfortable position and softly close your eyes.
- Take a slow breath in and out through your nostrils, and on the exhale, allow your shoulders to come down and release. Do this for a few breaths. Now, bring your awareness to your mouth and unclench your jaw. Create some space between your upper and lower teeth. Relax your tongue on the roof of your mouth just behind your two front teeth, resting on your upper palate remembering to take longer inhalation and exhalation of breath.
- After a few breaths, begin to silently think the words, “I am breathing in”, on the inhale and “I am breathing out” on the exhale.
- Now, notice the space in between the inhale and the exhale. That space where the breath turns around from an in-breath to an out-breath. Simply acknowledge that space or if you like, linger there, and you decide when the breath turns around from an inhale to an exhale.

Don't hold your breath; just linger there for a moment.

- Continue to follow your breath for as long as you feel comfortable. Preferably 5-10 minutes.

## **Transcendental Meditation:**



- Sit in a comfortable chair. Keep your back and neck straight. Close your eyes.
- Begin with 30 seconds of quiet. Ease into the mantra, a meaningless "vibration word" your teacher gave you.
- Repeat the mantra in your head at no particular rhythm.
- Don't think about your breathing.
- Let the mantra draw your attention, but allow thoughts to float by.
- You may experience moments of "transcendence" a pleasant feeling of restful alertness.
- Meditate for 20 minutes. Take three mantra-free minutes before opening your eyes.
- Practice twice daily, ideally before breakfast and again before dinner.

## Body scan meditation



- Rest into the position.  
Lie on your back with your legs a little apart from each other and your arms slightly away from the sides of your body with your palms facing upwards.
- Become aware of your inner attitude.  
Let go of any ideas about self-improvement or personal development
- Breathe.  
Focus your attention on your breathing for a few minutes.
- Move your attention through your whole body, step by step.  
Gradually move your attention up through your feet, lower legs, upper legs, pelvic area, lower torso, upper torso, shoulders, upper arms, lower arms and hands. Then up to your neck, face, back of your head and finally the top of your head. This whole process can take 15 to 30 minutes.
- Imagine that your breath is sweeping up and down your body.  
As you breathe in, imagine your in-breath starting at your toes and reaching the top of your head. As you breathe out, your out-breath sweeps from the top of your head down to your toes.

- Just be.  
Rest in your own inner sense of aliveness, of presence, of being.
- Stand up slowly.  
Gently bring the meditation to a close. Hopefully, this has been a deep and nourishing experience, so avoid jumping up straight away or you may feel dizzy. Get up gradually and mindfully, feeling the sensations in your body as you do so. Record your experiences of the body scan meditation.