

St. Peter's C of E Primary School



PARENT'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING NEWSLETTER

Meditation for beginners

Why try meditation?

Maybe you want to start meditating because you want to be less reactive or feel less stressed. Whatever the reason, training the mind through meditation is training in awareness which offers you the potential to fundamentally transform your perspective on life. It is simple to learn and involves some fairly straightforward techniques. Meditation helps to change your perspective on thoughts or feelings by teaching you to observe and let them go without getting caught up in them.

Unguided meditation

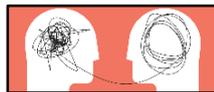
Unguided meditation involves simply sitting in quiet and paying attention to the body and thoughts for a set period of time.

- The first step is to commit to a regular practice, a few times a week if possible. Be clear about the time you will carve out - 10 or 15 minutes initially - and where you will sit, relatively undisturbed.
- Wear whatever you like, something comfortable and relaxed.
- Meditate inside or outside, sit on the floor, a cushion, bench, chair, or anything else that works for you.
- When first starting out, begin with a 10-minute session. You can always make the jump to 15 or 20 minutes the more familiar you become with training your mind.
- Take it session by session, there is no "good" or "bad" meditation, and there is no "succeeding" or "failing".

It's normal when first starting to meditate that you feel restlessness, bored, fearful, anxious, overwhelmed, or generally resistant. In time and with practice, all obstacles lessen, and the process will feel easier. It's always easy to start something new, early enthusiasm wanes. This is a common issue with meditation, because the exercises can sometimes feel repetitive. It's worth remembering that we are training the mind to shift the way we relate to our thoughts and feelings and that takes time.

Courtesy of Headspace (see website and app for further information).

The importance of talking



In reality, your brain and body get a lot out of **talking**.

When you are feeling intense feelings, your amygdala is running the show. This is the part of the brain that among other things, handles your fight or flight response. It is the job of the amygdala, and your limbic system as a whole, to figure out if something is a threat, devise a response to that threat if necessary, and store the information in your memory so you can recognise the threat later.

When you get stressed or overwhelmed, this part of your brain can take control and even override more logical thought processes. **Holding back thoughts and emotions is stressful.** You have the negative feelings either way, but you have to work to repress them. This can tax the brain and body, making you more susceptible to getting sick or just feeling awful.

So...

- Choose the right people to talk to. Having a trusted person in work or at home who will support you (without enabling bad habits like co-rumination) can help.
- Choose the right time to talk - just as important as choosing who to talk to is 'when' you talk to them.
- Give yourself an endpoint. Not all conversations about your problems need to lead to a plan of action for tangible change, but they do need to lead to something other than more complaining.
- Talk about the good as well as the bad. Expressing how you're feeling is healthy and talking positive, leads to positivity!

If at any time you feel you need support: Samaritans 116123 or NHS Wellbeing Helpline: 08009154640

Breathing exercise for stress

This calming breathing technique for stress, anxiety and panic takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere.

You will get the most benefit if you do it regularly, as part of your daily routine.

You can do it standing up, sitting in a chair that supports your back, or lying on a bed or yoga mat on the floor.

Make yourself as comfortable as you can. If you can, loosen any clothes that restrict your breathing.

If you're lying down, place your arms a little bit away from your sides, with the palms up. Let your legs be straight, or bend your knees so your feet are flat on the floor.

If you're sitting, place your arms on the chair arms.

If you're sitting or standing, place both feet flat on the ground. Whatever position you're in, place your feet roughly hip-width apart.

Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.

Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5. You may not be able to reach 5 at first.

Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from 1 to 5 again, if you find this helpful.

Keep doing this for 3 to 5 minutes.

Easy cornflake crunchy chicken and chips (serves 4)

- 4 skinless chicken breasts (cut into bitesize pieces)
- 125g cornflakes
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 2 medium eggs, beaten
- 4 large white potatoes (cut into wedges, skin on)



Method

1. Preheat oven to 200c/fan 180/gas mark 6.
2. Place potato wedges onto baking tray, spray with oil and roast for 25 minutes.
3. Crush cornflakes in a bag with a rolling pin.
4. Put the crushed cornflakes, flour and beaten eggs into a bowl and mix. Line baking tray with paper.
5. Cover the chicken with the mixture and place on baking tray. Put into the oven to bake for 20 minutes, turning half way through cooking.

Take time to...

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY on a Walk

BRAIN

Walking boosts blood flow to the brain, decreases stress hormones and releases endorphins, improving mood, lowering depression and reducing the risk of cognitive decline.

BLOOD

Walking can help reduce insulin resistance, keeping blood sugar levels balanced and energy levels even.

MUSCLES

Walking up and down hills increases the activation of the hip, knee and ankle muscles; the steeper the grade, the bigger the benefit.

HEART

Increasing your heart rate improves blood flow and helps your heart pump more efficiently, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

BONES

Like other weight-bearing activities, walking can help maintain bone health.

DIGESTION

A post-meal walk can help food move through your digestive system, reducing bloating and digestion problems.

WEIGHT

Walking at least 30 minutes per day is linked to lower body weight, body fat and waist circumference.

JOINTS

Movement increases the circulation of synovial fluid around the joints, providing essential lubrication and nutrients to the cartilage, the tissues that act as a cushion between bones.



myfitnesspal

Healthy Sleeping Habits

Sleep is an important part of maintaining proper health. When we sleep our body has a chance to heal and reset. Just like it is important to practice proper form when lifting weights, getting good sleep with minimal disturbances is a component of a healthy lifestyle.

If you have trouble sleeping remember to wind down. Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour before bed doing a calming activity such as reading. For some people, using an electronic device

such as a laptop can make it hard to fall asleep, because the particular type of light emanating from the screens of these devices is activating to the brain. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid electronics before bed or in the middle of the night.

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