

100 Benefits of Meditation

There are many advantages to meditation. Meditation is a powerful practice – whether in a spiritual or neutral context. The list here is a summary of most benefits.

There are many forms of meditation, ranging from contemplative prayer to Buddhist Zen meditation. All have their value for what they try to accomplish. The list below shows mostly positive side effects of meditation, but does not necessarily constitute the sole purpose of meditative practice. While we appreciate these benefits, the purpose of zazen (sitting meditation) is *clearing the mind*. Everything we do becomes meditation, i.e. Zen, and hence our Zen practice results ultimately in a peaceful, meditative lifestyle.

It needs to be emphasized that the effects of meditation will become apparent in relation to the intensity of meditation. In other words, occasional meditation can only produce relatively few of these elements, while regular meditation, especially under the guidance of a teacher (Zen master), will produce most if not all of these benefits.

Zazen is about silent meditation, focusing on breathing and posture in an environment that is conducive to clearing the mind. Hence we do not advocate any type of “guided meditation”, background music and the like.

I. Physiological benefits

- 1- lowers oxygen consumption
decreases respiratory rate
- 2- increases blood flow and slows the heart rate
- 3- increases exercise tolerance
- 4- leads to a deeper level of physical relaxation
- 5- good for people with high blood pressure
- 6- reduces anxiety attacks by lowering the levels of blood lactate
- 7- decreases muscle tension
- 8- helps in chronic diseases like allergies, arthritis etc.
- 9- reduces pre-menstrual symptoms
- 10- helps in post-operative healing

- 12- enhances the immune system
- 13- reduces activity of viruses and emotional distress
- 14- enhances energy, strength and vigor
- 15- helps with weight loss
- 16- reduction of free radicals, less tissue damage
- 17- higher skin resistance
- 18- drop in cholesterol levels, lowers risk of cardiovascular disease
- 19- improved flow of air to the lungs resulting in easier breathing
- 20- decreases the aging process
- 21- higher levels of DHEAS (Dehydroepiandrosterone)
- 22- prevented, slowed or controlled pain of chronic diseases
- 23- makes you sweat less
- 24- may help in curing headaches & migraines
- 25- greater orderliness of brain functioning
- 26- reduced need for medical care
- 27- less energy wasted
- 28- more inclined to sports, activities
- 29- significant relief from asthma
- 30- improved performance in athletic events
- 31- normalizes to your ideal weight
- 32- harmonizes our endocrine system
- 33- relaxes our nervous system
- 34- produces lasting beneficial changes in brain electrical activity
- 35- may help in curing infertility (the stresses of infertility can interfere with the release of hormones that regulate ovulation).

II. Psychological benefits

- 36- builds self-confidence
- 37- increases serotonin level, influences mood and behaviour
- 38- resolves phobias and fears
- 39- helps control own thoughts
- 40- helps with focus and concentration
- 41- increases creativity
- 42- increased brain wave coherence
- 43- improved learning ability and memory
- 44- increased feelings of vitality and rejuvenation
- 45- increased emotional stability
- 46- improved relationships
- 47- mind ages at slower rate
- 48- easier to remove bad habits

- 49- develops intuition
- 50- increased Productivity
- 51- improved relations at home and at work
- 52- ability to see the larger picture in a given situation
- 53- helps ignore petty issues
- 54- increased ability to solve complex problems
- 55- purifies your character
- 56- develops will power
- 57- greater communication between the two brain hemispheres
- 58- react more quickly and more effectively to a stressful event
- 59- increases one's perceptual ability and motor performance
- 60- higher intelligence growth rate
- 61- increased job satisfaction
- 62- increases the capacity for intimate contact with loved ones
- 63- decreases the potential for mental illness
- 64- more sociable behavior
- 65- less aggressiveness
- 66- helps in smoking cessation and alcohol addiction
- 67- reduces the need and dependency on drugs, pills and pharmaceuticals
- 68- less need of sleep to recover from sleep deprivation
- 69- requires less time to fall asleep, helps to cure insomnia
- 70- increases sense of responsibility
- 71- reduces road rage
- 72- decrease in restless thinking
- 73- decreased tendency to worry
- 74- increases listening skills and empathy
- 75- helps to make more accurate judgments
- 76- greater tolerance
- 77- gives composure to act in considered and constructive ways
- 78- grows a stable, more balanced personality
- 79- develops emotional maturity

III. Spiritual benefits

- 80- helps to keep things in perspective
- 81- provides peace of mind, happiness
- 82- helps to discover your purpose
- 83- increased self-actualization
- 84- increased compassion
- 85- spiritual growth

- 86- deeper understanding of yourself and others**
- 87- brings body, mind, spirit in harmony**
- 88- deeper level of spiritual relaxation**
- 89- increased acceptance of oneself**
- 90- helps to learn forgiveness**
- 91- changes attitude toward life**
- 92- creates a deeper relationship with your higher power or deity**
- 93- attains enlightenment**
- 94- greater inner-directedness**
- 95- helps living in the present moment**
- 96- creates a widening, deepening capacity for love**
- 97- discovery of the power and consciousness beyond the ego**
- 98- experience an inner sense of assurance**
- 99- experience a sense of oneness**
- 100- increases the synchronicity in one's life**

Meditation is completely free. It requires no special equipment, and is not complicated to learn. It can be practiced anywhere, at any given moment, and it is not time consuming (15-20 minutes per day is recommended). Best of all, meditation has no negative side effects, whatsoever. There is nothing but positive to be gained from it. With such a huge list of benefits, the question to ask yourself is, “Why am I not meditating yet?”

[This list was compiled from an original blog posting by Frederic Premji and has been edited and expanded by Fajian]