

Meditation

Integrated and Complementary Medicine



What is Meditation?

Meditation is a mind-body practice to focus attention and to enhance relaxation or increase calmness. The practice of meditation is rooted in eastern religions or spiritual practices. There are a variety of different types of meditation, but all have four elements in common¹:

- A quiet location
- A specific, comfortable posture
- Focused attention
- Open attitude

Based on a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey, meditation is not a widely used technique as only approximately 4.1 percent of adults indicated they had used meditation in 2012.² However, meditation may be a useful element of a comprehensive treatment plan when recovering from a wound, illness, or injury.

Why is it used?

Meditation is used as a method for alleviating depression, anxiety, insomnia, pain, and stress. The use of meditation or other mindfulness techniques may be a beneficial part of a treatment plan.

Benefits

One of the primary benefits of personal meditation is that it's free, can be done in a variety of locations, and includes different techniques to suit your personal needs. From a scientific standpoint, there is inconclusive evidence to substantiate the impact of meditation on well-being and healing. Several studies have examined the use of mindfulness and meditation as a therapy for traumatic brain injury (TBI), but there is no substantive evidence to show these contribute to TBI recovery. Yoga Nidra Meditation or iRest, which is a specific type of deep relaxation and meditation, has been implemented at several military installations for treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Participants have noted decreases in anxiety, insomnia,

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depression, angry outbursts, and hypervigilance. Additionally, it was noted to help reduce pain and improve perceived control in life, even over things the service member could not directly control.³

Availability

Most forms of meditation can be conducted outside of a Medical Treatment Facility and are therefore not covered by TRICARE. Clinical forms of meditation such as transcendental meditation are not currently covered by TRICARE. Talk to your healthcare provider about incorporating meditation into your treatment, particularly if you have experienced a TBI.

How can I learn more?

- [Meditation Overview](#)
- [Can Meditation help TBI?](#)
- [Relax, Relax Toolkit](#)
- [Meditation Techniques](#)
- [Breathing, Meditation, and Relaxation Techniques](#)

References

1. Meditation: An Introduction. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>. Published February 2006. Updated June 2010. Accessed 10 July 2014.
2. Peregoy JA, Clarke TC, Jones LJ, et al. Regional variation in use of complementary health approaches by U.S. adults. NCHS data brief, no 146. National Center for Health Statistics. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db146.pdf>. Published April 2014. Accessed June 2014.
3. Mind Body Skills for Regulating the Autonomic Nervous System. Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. <http://www.dcoe.mil/content/Navigation/Documents/Mind-Body%20Skills%20for%20Regulating%20the%20Autonomic%20Nervous%20System.pdf>. Published June 2011, Version 2. Accessed 10 July 2014.