



Mindful Meditation

Meditation is a form of strength training for the mind and helps you feel calm and peaceful, regardless of the craziness going on around you. The goal of meditation isn't to control your thoughts, it's to stop letting them control you.

Meditation is more than just a way to decompress after a long, stressful day; it's a practiced skill that allows you to reconnect with the present moment and reprogram your thoughts. Getting swept up with worry about the past or anxiety about the future can be easy. Incorporating five minutes of meditation a day can make a difference in mindset and attitude while improving attention span, self-awareness and insomnia. Just like any skill, meditation takes practice. For positive effects to start, repetition and guidance are key.

According to Alice Boyes, Ph.D., for meditation to be successful, it's important to do it your own way. Since walking helps people concentrate and reduces distractibility, a meditation that involves walking can be a great place to start. Psychology Today blogger, Dr. Kelly McGonigal, suggests a 10-minute walking meditation involving one minute of paying attention to each of the following points of focus:

1. The feeling of your body walking.
2. The feeling of your breath.
3. The sensations of air or wind on your skin.
4. What you can hear.
5. What you can see.

Follow this with five minutes of open awareness, where you allow anything you can observe or sense to rise into your awareness. During the open awareness portion, if your attention drifts to past, future or evaluative thoughts, briefly go back to one of the above points of focus to stabilize your attention. You can adapt these instructions however you want. You are in charge of making the practice of meditation your own.