



Meditation Benefits for Individuals and for Society as a Whole

By Robert Elias Najemy

How is Meditation Used Today?

People from all walks of life, in all the countries of the world belonging to all the possible religions, meditate for a wide variety of reasons. The same technique offers something different to each according to his needs and motives. Some of the motives for which people meditate today are:

1. To relax the body, mind and rejuvenate one's flow of energy in order to more effectively face the responsibilities of one's demanding and active life.
2. To heal illnesses (especially psychosomatic ones).
3. To overcome emotional problems.
4. To develop a more relaxed and positive view towards life.
5. To develop a peaceful and more clearly functioning mind.
6. For greater ability to penetrate into the core of problems and find inspirational solutions. This has been found especially useful by scientists and businessmen.
7. To tune into a creative inspirations for artistic expression.
8. For freeing oneself from addictions such as cigarettes, alcohol, narcotics and tranquilizers.
9. To purify one's character.
10. To develop will-power.
11. As a method of self-observation and self-discovery.
12. To develop the latent powers of the mind.
13. To create a relationship with God.
14. To develop an inner relationship with the Divine.
15. For spiritual growth, self-knowledge or enlightenment.
16. To transcend the identification with the body and mind, and experience spiritual realities.

17. For the ecstasy of union with the Universal Spirit, which is the essential reality of the universe.

Scientific Research on the Effects of Meditation on the Body and Personality Numerous scientific experiments on people who meditate and similar control groups who do not meditate, have given repeatable results concerning the effects of meditation on a person's body and personality. Most of the following studies have been made on persons practicing Transcendental Meditation. (However, my personal opinion after 34 years of practicing various forms including T.M., is that most forms of meditation will give the same results)

1. DEEP PHYSIOLOGICAL REST is shown by a distinct drop in the metabolism rate, as measured by the oxygen consumption by an individual in meditation, waking activity, sleep and hypnosis.
2. Another indication of the deep rest is that the number of breaths needed to be taken each minute during meditation drops significantly.
3. Good news for those with heart problems is that meditation is also extremely restful and rejuvenating for the heart.
4. Another indication of the deep rest produced by meditation is the significant drop in the blood lactate level. The lower the lactate level the more rested and rejuvenated is the muscle tissue.
5. Tests show meditation's deep calming effect through the decrease in skin conductivity.
6. Brain wave measurements during meditation show a higher incidence of alpha waves indicating a restful alertness. There is a sense of peace and yet a wakeful awareness in one's environment.
7. Another scientific study showed that meditation induces greater communication and interaction between the two hemispheres of the brain.
8. Perhaps the best documented and well known effects of meditation concern its ability to reduce blood pressure in those with high blood pressure. LONG TERM PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES
9. In the long run both the heart rate and breathing rate develop a slower pace as the body experiences less mental-emotional stress and learns to waste less energy. The body becomes more relaxed and more efficient.
10. Persons who meditate experience much more stable health. They have fewer illnesses in general in their lives. LONG TERM PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES
11. Studies have also shown that those who meditate regularly react more quickly and more effectively to a stressful event.
12. Meditation also increases one's perceptual ability and motor performance.
13. Studies on high school students showed that those who meditated had a higher «intelligence growth rate» than those who did not.
14. Memory recall is also enhanced by meditation.
15. Many psychological studies have been made in work environments concerning meditators and control groups of non-meditators.

Meditators had above average increases in

- a. JOB SATISFACTION
- b. PRODUCTIVITY,
- c. Improvement in their relationships with coworkers' d. Improvement in their relationship with their supervisors.

16. A large number of psychological tests have been done on those who have been meditating for various periods of time. A test made on those who had been meditating for only two months in comparison to non-meditators produced the following results: a. Meditators had greater inner-directedness than non-meditators. b. They measured higher self acceptance. c. Greater spontaneity and creativity. d. Greater self-esteem. e. An increase in the capacity for intimate contact with loved ones. f. Less anxiety.

17. Prisoners who started meditation showed:

a. A marked decrease in mental illness.

b. Their behavior became more socially acceptable.

c. Less anxiety and less aggressiveness.

d. Became inclined to more positive activities such as sports, clubs and educational activities. OTHER LONG TERM PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES

18. After 4 to 6 weeks of meditation, meditators with hypertension have found their blood pressure fall.

19. A group of meditators who had been suffering from bronchial asthma found significant relief.

20. Meditators checked for their consumption of cigarettes after starting to meditate showed marked decrease.

21. Meditation significantly reduces ones need for or dependency on tranquilizers. alcohol and or drugs.

22. Other tests made on meditators show that they need much less sleep to recover from sleep deprivation.

23. Meditators show significant decrease in the illness after starting meditation.

24. Meditators showed greatly increased ability to recover from psychosomatic illnesses.

25. Insomniacs who start meditation require much less time to fall asleep.

26. A study on athletes showed that, after starting to meditate, there was an improvement in their performance on various athletic events as well as their intelligence as measured by intelligence tests.

27. In one other study it was found that meditation has the tendency to normalize a person's weight. That is if he is overweight, he tends to loose, and if he is underweight, he tends to gain.

SOME CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THESE RESEARCH STUDIES The conclusion is obvious. Meditation increases whatever is good and life supporting in a person. It strengthens our immune system, harmonizes our endocrine system and relaxes our nervous system. It creates health and vitality.

On a mental level it develops inner peace, clarity, self-confidence, self-acceptance, creativity, productivity and eventually greater self-actualization. It makes our work environment more satisfactory, improves our relationships with coworkers, supervisors and subordinates. It makes us more creative, more responsible and more productive.

On a spiritual level it puts us in contact with our inner voice, with our inner strength, with our inner spiritual wisdom and love. Think now, what would happen if many people in our society meditated' How would it affect our society' Think what would happen if you meditated daily.

(Adapted from the forthcoming "The Art of Meditation" by Robert Elias Najemy.

His writings can be viewed at <http://www.HolisticHarmony.com> where you can also download FREE articles and e-books. About the author: Robert Elias Najemy is the author of over 600 articles, 400 lecture cassettes on Human Harmony and 20 books, which have sold over 100,000 copies. He is the Founder and director of the Center for Harmonious Living in Greece with 3700 members.