

TEXTO

Breath Meditation: A Great Way to Relieve Stress

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation in your personal life that prevents you from relaxing. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. However, according to an article published by the Harvard Medical School, psychological stress has a devastating effect on health. Research shows that people with heart disease do worse over time if they don't control stress, and stress seems to be associated with a higher risk for cancer, poorer memory, and more aches. However, reducing stress helps you sleep restfully and control high blood pressure.

One of the easiest ways to reduce stress is connected to breathing. Paying attention to your breath is a form of “entry level” meditation that anyone can do. You'll notice an immediate sense of relaxation that could help protect your health over time. Simple breathing meditation requires only that you find a comfortable position in a place with minimal distractions. You may sit, stand, or walk—whichever you prefer. Many people find the sitting position to be best.

If you enjoy it, breath meditation can be a gateway to a broader practice of “mindfulness,” in which you learn to accept and appreciate what comes in life and stop fighting your own thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness is a concept that originated in Buddhism, although its fundamental principles are shared by many spiritual traditions, philosophies, and religions. Mindfulness simply means the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment.

“Many people take up mindfulness practices thinking they'd like to relax more, but where it leads is a very different approach to life and its inevitable challenges,” says Dr. Ronald D. Siegel. The mind can be a noisy, busy place. As you try to focus your attention, thoughts will often arise. The key is not to get annoyed or impatient with your restless mind. Acknowledge the thoughts and let your attention slip from them. “Learning to focus attention and relax is a skill,” Dr. Siegel says. “As with any skill, your ability to focus and relax will improve with practice.”

Adapted from “Breath Meditation: A great way to relieve stress,” Harvard.edu, April 15, 2014.
<<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/breath-meditation-a-great-way-to-relievestress#:~:text=Many%20people%20find%20it%20helpful,the%20same%20time%20every%20day>>

QUESTIONS

A.1.- Indicate whether **TWO** of the following statements are True, False or the information is Not Given in the text (T/F/NG). In true and false cases, copy the complete sentence that contains the evidence which justifies your answer. No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE. (Puntuación máxima: 2 puntos)

a) Only experienced meditators can relax by focusing on breathing.

False. Evidence: "Paying attention to your breath is a form of "entry level" meditation that anyone can do."

b) Listening to music while practicing breathing exercises is becoming very popular.

Evidence: Not given.

c) The practice of mindfulness requires deliberate observation of the here and now without forming particular opinions.

True: "Mindfulness simply means the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment."

A.2.- In your own words and based on the ideas in the text, answer the following questions. Do not copy from the text. (Puntuación máxima: 2 puntos)

a) Explain two negative consequences of stress on health.

a.1) Psychological stress can be very damaging because, if you don't control it, you have more chances of suffering from cancer or problems with your memory or more pains.

a.2) Two negative consequences of stress on health are its impact on heart disease and its association with other serious health conditions. Research suggests that stress worsens the condition of people with heart disease over time if not managed properly. Additionally, it is linked to a higher likelihood of developing cancer, memory problems, and physical discomfort.

b) Why do people start practicing mindfulness and what is the result of that practice?

b.1) People start practicing mindfulness because they want to feel calmer, and the result is a change in their perspective of life.

b.2) People often begin practicing mindfulness because they want to feel more relaxed and reduce stress. However, the result of consistent mindfulness practice is more profound—it helps

individuals develop a new way of approaching life's challenges by accepting their thoughts and feelings without judgment. This shift in mindset leads to greater mental clarity and calmness over time.

A.3.- Find the words in the text that mean: (Puntuación máxima: 1 punto)

- a) terrible (paragraph 1) **devastating**
- b) wish (paragraph 2) **prefer**
- c) door (paragraph 3) **gateway**
- d) emerge (paragraph 4) **arise**

A.4.- Answer FOUR questions (from a to f) of your choice.

Write a new sentence that has the same meaning as the one given. Use the word or expression in brackets. Do not change the word(s) given. (Puntuación máxima: 2 puntos)

- a) I should have started working on the project last month. (if only)
If only I had started working on the project last month
- b) When I play football, I feel very happy. (makes)
Playing football makes me feel very happy.
- c) "I won't go to that boring party," said Nick. (refused)
Nick refused to go to that boring party.
- d) First, David wrote his mother an email, and then he apologised for his behaviour. (after)
After writing his mother an email, David apologised for his behaviour

Complete the following sentences to report what was said.

- e) "What is he going to do to relax?" Sue asked me.

Sue asked me **what he was going to do to relax.**

Rephrase the sentence beginning with the words given.

- f) They are building a new high-technology hospital in my town.

A new high-technology **hospital is being built in my town.**

A.5.- Write between 150 and 200 words on ONE of the following questions. (Puntuación máxima: 3 puntos)

a) Should physical education be mandatory in secondary schools? Justify your answer.

Physical education (PE) plays a significant role in the development of students, but the question of whether it should be mandatory in secondary schools remains a topic of debate.

One of the main arguments in favour of mandatory PE is that it promotes physical health and well-being. Adolescence is a critical time for forming healthy habits, and regular exercise helps prevent issues like obesity and heart disease. Additionally, PE supports mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, improving focus, and even boosting academic performance. The social benefits, such as teamwork and leadership skills, further make PE an important part of a well-rounded education.

However, some people believe that making PE mandatory might not be the best approach. They argue that it takes time away from core subjects, like math and science, which are seen as more critical for students' futures. Furthermore, not all students enjoy physical activity or benefit equally from PE, and for some, it may become a source of frustration rather than improvement.

In conclusion, while there are valid concerns about mandatory physical education, its benefits to both physical and mental health outweigh the drawbacks. It ensures that all students have the opportunity to develop healthy habits and important life skills, making it an essential part of secondary education.

b) Write an informal e-mail to an English friend about something positive and interesting that has happened in your school recently.

Subject: Exciting News from School!

Hey Noah,

I hope you're doing well! I wanted to share some awesome news about something really cool that happened at my school recently. We just had a talent show last week, and it was a blast! There were all sorts of performances—singing, dancing, magic tricks, and even stand-up comedy. The whole school gathered in the auditorium, and the energy was amazing.

One of the best moments was when our friend Rachel played guitar and sang a song she wrote herself. No one knew she had such talent, and the crowd went wild! It was really impressive, and I was so proud of her. Even the teachers were clapping along!

After the show, there was a small party in the school courtyard, and we all got to hang out and chat about the performances. It really brought everyone together, and it felt great to be part of such a fun event.

Hope to hear from you soon! What's new with you?

Take care, Sandra