

**Welcome to the data sheet for Evidence for Meditation.**

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<https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/what-is-meditation-mindfulness-c>

This dataset is twinned with a visualisation from the book, Knowledge is Beautiful by David McCandless

You can find out more here:

<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/2014/knowledge-is-beautiful/>

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<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net>

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Thanks

David

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<b>posture</b>	<a href="https://informationist">https://informationist</a>
Sit	
Relaxed but erect	
Comfortable	
Straight spine	
Eyes open or closed	
Tuck chin	
tongue roof of mouth	
lips lightly pressed together	
shoulders back	
knees lower than hips	
no tension in shoulders	
pelvis forward	
belly out	
buttocks back	
chest up & out	
erect, alert, still	
<b>posture</b>	
breath naturally	
through the nose	
<b>timing</b>	
ideally first thing in the morning	
before a meal	
ideally every day	
<b>tips</b>	
stretch first	
make it regular (2 x a day)	
try different types of meditation	
early in the morning is best	
<b>it's not what you think</b>	
the goal of meditation is not empty the mind	
the goal is to observe mental phenomena non-judgementally	
this gives us insight into how the mind works	
and allows us to relax more deeply	





broad area	summary	detail	specific area of change	category	strength of science	
				social, cognitive, emotional, physical	4 strong, 3 promising, 2 inconclusive, 1 slight, 0 none	see evidence long for details and sources
	<a href="https://informatic">https://informatic</a>					
awareness	Improves ability to concentrate on tasks and ignore distractions.	Measurable differences in brain activity between regular meditators and non-meditators in regions responsible for controlling and directing attention, even while not meditating.	concentration	cognitive	4	
awareness	slightly better eyesight	Meditation training may help people focus for a long time on a task that requires them to distinguish small differences between things they see.	visual discrimination	cognitive	1	
intelligence	may boost memory	May boost short- to medium- term memory for factual details, possibly by reducing stress, but results are mixed.	memory	cognitive	2	
intelligence	weak evidence for intelligence boost	One month of meditation might improve IQ and cognitive functioning – but evidence is weak. It's possible meditation only affects intelligence if a person believes it will (expectation effect).	general IQ	cognitive	1	
intelligence	might enhance creative thinking	Types of meditation involving opening the mind to thoughts and emotions appear to promote creative thinking.	creativity	cognitive	1	
awareness	slightly increased aesthetic sensitivity	Focusing on the physical sensation of breathing before listening to music appears to increase aesthetic sensitivity and focused engagement, enhancing the experience.	musical engagement	cognitive + emotional	1	
mental health	reduces anxiety	Effective at reducing anxiety symptoms. Appears to activate parts of the brain associated with regulating self-referential thoughts.	anxiety	cognitive, emotional, physical	3	
mental health	reduces stress	Focusing on the present rather than letting the mind wander may help to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and protect against the effect of chronic stress. Engagement in compassion meditation may also reduce stress-induced immune and behavioral responses.	stress	cognitive, emotional, physical	3	
mental health	alleviates depression - and may prevent it	Mindfulness therapies recommended as treatment for depression, and may also prevent it. Non-reactivity to inner experience is the key facet of mindfulness that protects individuals from psychological risk for depression.	depression	cognitive, emotional, physical	3	
mental health	may relief symptoms	Mixed results for war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder	PTSD	cognitive, emotional, physical	2	
mental health	may improve sleep quality	Emerging evidence from small trials that mindfulness techniques, including meditation and yoga, may improve sleep quality and duration and reduce worry.	insomnia	cognitive, emotional, physical	2	
mental health		No evidence yet that meditation works as a tool for training attention among people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.	ADHD	cognitive, emotional, physical	0	
physical health		Patients with disabling physical conditions without a well-defined physical cause – such as fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome – might be helped by mindfulness therapy.	psychosomatic illness	cognitive, emotional, physical	1	
self regulation	improves self-control	Improves activation and connectivity in brain areas related to self regulation. Appears to strengthen self control and prevent sapping of willpower by reducing emotional interference on tasks.	willpower	emotional, cognitive	3	
physical health	may affect longevity	Practicing meditation is associated with longer telomeres – biomarkers associated with longevity – possibly because it reduces stress. One study showed Zen meditation could reduce age-related cognitive decline.	ageing	physical	2	
physical health	possibly reduction	Evidence that regularly practising Transcendental or Zen meditation may significantly reduce blood pressure.	blood pressure	physical	2	
physical health	may protect against stress-induced illnesses	Meditation may reduce stress-induced immune responses and reduce susceptibility to colds and flu: in trials, meditating subjects took fewer days off work.	immune system	physical	2	
physical health	may positively affect heart health	Transcendental Meditation appears to positively affect several markers of cardiovascular health. In a 5-year trial of 200 African Americans with heart disease, those who practiced TM regularly were 48% less likely to have a heart attack, stroke or die from all causes compared with those who attended a health education class.	cardiovascular health	physical	2	
physical health		Mindfulness based therapies appear to give people the ability to dampen down the inflammatory response in response to stress, so might be useful treatments for inflammatory conditions.	inflammation	physical	1	
self regulation	expert meditators can boost their body temperatures	Some expert meditators can maintain a slightly raised body temperature to withstand freezing environments, including Tibetan nuns and a man with several world records for cold tolerance.	body temperature	physical	1	
other	physically changes the brain, especially in areas related to breathing, pain & emotion	Long-term meditation practitioners show significant differences in brain structure compared to non-meditating controls in several areas, including those relating to breathing, pain and emotion.	brain structure	physical, cognitive	4	
other		Mindfulness associated with slower, more controlled body movements and better awareness of movement.	motor skills	physical, cognitive	1	
self regulation	makes pain less unpleasant by reducing its emotional impact	Seems to make pain less unpleasant by reducing its emotional impact. Might even reduce the need for painkillers.	pain sensitivity	physical, emotional	3	
self regulation	may help weight-loss	Mindfulness practices may help to control stress-related binge eating, but results for weight loss so far inconclusive. Many studies small or lacking control groups.	weight loss	physical, emotional	2	
self regulation	may help smokers quit	Preliminary results suggest meditation might help smokers quit, but more studies needed. In one study, 2 weeks of meditation training reduced smoking rates by 60% and increased brain activity in areas relating to self control.	smoking	physical, emotional	2	
self regulation	could have a role in substance abuse cessation	A promising treatment for substance abuse disorders, but more research needed. In one study, Vipassana meditation significantly reduced alcohol, marijuana, and crack cocaine use among ex-prisoners.	drug addiction	physical, emotional	2	

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<a href="https://informatics">https://informatics</a>				social, cognitive, emotional, physical	4 strong, 3 promising, 2 inconclusive, 1 slight, 0 none	see evidence long for details and sources
awareness	increases empathy and responsiveness to others' emotions	Practicing meditation focused on cultivating compassion appears to increase activation in brain regions associated with empathy in response to emotional images or sounds, even when a person is not actively meditating. Meditation boosts the ability to read others' facial expressions accurately, and may even make a person more likely to come to another's aid.	empathy + compassion	social, emotional	3	
awareness		One study showed people become more open and politically liberal immediately after practicing guided meditation, regardless of whether they are liberal or conservative to begin with.	political views	social, emotional	1	

<https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/what-is>

**Mindfulness-based cancer recovery and supportive-expressive therapy maintain telomere length relative to controls in distressed breast cancer survivors**

<http://onlinelibrary.wi>