

# Healthy Mind™

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## Meditation

### The Power of the Mind

Meditation is a mental discipline, which has been proven to improve creative thinking, increase energy levels and reduce stress. According to the *Huffington Post*, there's even research to suggest that meditation can improve a variety of psychological symptoms, such as stress, anxiety, addiction, depression, eating disorders and cognitive function. Meditation changes the brain. Since the brain's cells and neurons are constantly making new connections based on response to stimuli, meditation affects the neural circuits of the brain, which ultimately affects how we respond to situations.

It is not crucial to be a meditation expert to have a successful session. For beginner meditators, the recommended length and frequency is once or twice a day for 20 minutes. Dr. Herbert Benson, a Harvard physician, outlines the simple steps on how to get started:

1. **Pick a time and place that you know will not have a lot of distractions or interruptions.** The place does not have to be at home nor does the room have to be completely dark.
2. **Get into a comfortable position.** Any position that allows your body to relax so that your mental state is not interrupted by any physical

discomfort. Be sure you've emptied your bladder before you begin.

3. **Close your eyes and let your mind go blank.** Simply concentrate on your breathing and try not think about worrisome thoughts. Since it is common for your mind to stray away, try to refocus on your breathing.
4. **Use a mental device.** A mantra or a simple phrase or word, such as "om" that is repeated in rhythm is a popular technique to help you concentrate. You will soon start to observe your thoughts, emotions and background sounds, without concerning yourself with all that's taking place around you.

