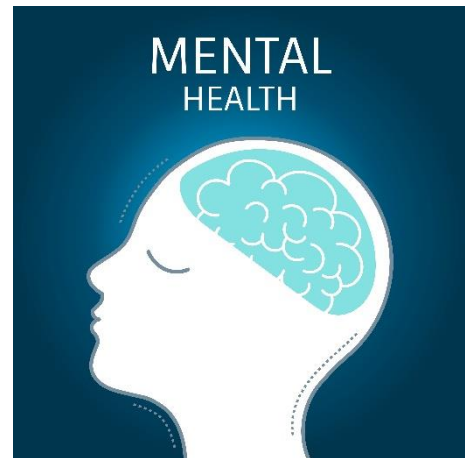


## Take Control of Your Mental Health with Mindfulness

Have you regularly felt stressed or have you been stress eating? Have you felt anxious or depressed? Suffered from unrestful sleep? Or have you been feeling that you need to stay more focused on what you're doing and improve your memory skills?

Well, you are not alone. We all have been in one or more of these situations at one point in our lives, either when studying, getting a new job, having a baby, or taking on more responsibilities at work or home, which can put our mental health under a lot of pressure.

If you feel like you want to feel better mentally, mindfulness might be a way to take back control of your mental health.



Studies have proven the many benefits of mindfulness on mental health. Here are just a few:

1. **Decreases stress:** One way to cope with stress is through the practice of mindfulness meditation. In meditation, you go beyond the noisy thoughts in the mind and enter a state of restful alertness. You're in a state of deep rest, yet your mind is fully alert and awake. In this state of restful alertness, the body experiences many healing effects, including:
  - Decreased heart rate
  - Normalization of blood pressure
  - Deeper breathing
  - Reduced production of stress hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline
  - Strengthened immunity
  - More efficient oxygen use by the body
  - Decreased inflammation in the body (Chopra 2018)
2. **Reduces stress eating:** Using mindful eating in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight can be obtained through a few checkpoints when eating. Before having the first bite you can ask yourself if you are hungry. While eating, notice the texture and flavor of each bite, checking how full you are during your meal and listening to your gut to know when to stop.
3. **Helps treat depression:** One of the ways in which mindfulness can help treat depression is through enhancing the practitioners' ability to regulate their emotions. Mindfulness provides the tools needed to step back from intense negative emotions, identify them, and accept them instead of fighting them. This allows mindful thinkers to better regulate their emotions, leading to better coping and management of depression. (Courtney, 2021).



4. Helps promote relaxation and restful sleep: Scientific studies have found that meditation can help you get the restful sleep that is so important to physical and emotional health. The brain produces more brainwaves (including the alpha and theta brainwaves) that are associated with deep relaxation. And when you are relaxed, especially before bedtime, you will most probably sleep better.
5. Improves focus: Mindfulness helps to train your brain to stay focused on one task at a time instead of being distracted by every thought or switching back and forth between tasks. That leads you to be more effective and less stressed. Although this could be hard in our demanding world that expects us to multitask, nevertheless studies have discovered that the conscious brain cannot multitask efficiently.
6. Improves cognition: People tend to lose some of their cognitive flexibility and short-term memory as they age. Mindfulness may be able to slow cognitive decline, even in people with Alzheimer's disease. (Suttie,2018).

#### **Cited works:**

Chopra D (2018,03,2018) *7 Ways Meditation Can Help You Reduce and Manage Stress*. Chopra. [7 Ways Meditation Can Help You Reduce and Manage Stress \(chopra.com\)](https://www.chopra.com/7-ways-meditation-can-help-you-reduce-and-manage-stress)

Shital K. (2020,10,22) *What Mindfulness Can Do for You*. WebMD. [Mindfulness: How It Helps Your Health \(webmd.com\)](https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/2020/10/22/what-mindfulness-can-do-for-you)

Courtney E. (2021,7,12) *23 Amazing Health Benefits of Mindfulness for Body and Brain*. Positive psychology. [23 Amazing Health Benefits of Mindfulness for Body and Brain \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/23-amazing-health-benefits-of-mindfulness-for-body-and-brain)

Suttie J. (2018,10,24) *Five Ways Mindfulness Meditation Is Good for Your Health*. Greater Good Magazine. [Five Ways Mindfulness Meditation Is Good for Your Health \(berkeley.edu\)](https://www.greatergoodmagazine.com/five-ways-mindfulness-meditation-is-good-for-your-health)