



Received: 04-01-2023
Accepted: 14-02-2023

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Breath (Anapanasati) Meditation

¹Siddappa Naragatti, ²Dr. Vadiraja HS

¹ Yoga Therapist, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, New Delhi, India

² Research Officer, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, New Delhi, India

Corresponding Author: **Siddappa Naragatti**

Abstract

This review paper is mainly focused on breath meditation know a day's its very much essential for everybody due to busy and half-hazard lifestyle, unhealthy environment, occurs disease everywhere and unstable mind. By practicing simple breathing meditation, intention to use this practice throughout the day to help cultivate and strengthen attention. Mindfully be present moment by moment with your breath. Watching the gentle rise of stomach on the in-breath and the relaxing, letting go on the out-breath. Be completely with

breath as it flows in and out. Feelings arising, perhaps sadness or happiness, frustration or contentment. Mindful breathing is an important way to establish a routine and become comfortable with the practice. Comprehensive practice will not only help to cultivate a sense of inner peace throughout daily life, but also give the tools to enhance the mindfulness of patients, students, women, and senior citizens or every type of workers.

Keywords: Meditation, Breath Inhale Exhale Strengthen Body and Mind

Introduction

Breath meditation adapted from Thich Nhat Hanh's A Short Teaching on Mindfulness Breathing and recommends daily practice for 5–10 minutes at regular times as well as throughout the day in stressful situations and emergencies.

This meditation tool suggests placing the word "breathe" in prominent areas to remind you to breathe mindfully and deeply throughout your day.

The traditional meditation known as 'The Mindfulness of Breathing.' Taught by Kamalashila for the last 20 years, this is one of the bases of any Buddhist practice an essential complement to the Metta Bhavana. Other meditations are also featured on the site. The primary goal is to describe mindful breathing as merely a calm, non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them. It can provide benefits such as a reduction in stress, increased calm and clarity, as well as the promotion of happiness.

Meditation

The English word 'Meditation' has been derived from two Latin words: Meditari means to think, ponder, dwell upon, exercise the mind etc. Mederi means to heal.

Hence, people mean different things when they use the term 'Meditation'. One definition, which finds a universal acceptance, is that meditation is a "no thought state" Maharshi Patanjali called this state as 'Chitta vritti Nirodhah'. This means, 'stillness of mind or no thought state'.

Anapanasati

'Ana' in pali language means in-breath and 'Apana' is out-breath. Sati means "to be one with". Hence, Anapanasati means to be one with the breath. It is also called "mindfulness of breath".

How to meditate

Posture: As Maharshi Patanjali had said, "Sthiram Sukham Asanam", for most of the people "Sukhasan" is the most comfortable posture. Choose a posture that is comfortable for you. It may be a sitting, supine, kneeling, reclining or standing posture. You can sit on a chair or on a stool. You may lie down on a cot or on the floor. Whichever is the most comfortable posture is the right posture for the practice.

Spectacles should be removed and eyes should be allowed to close softly. The body must be relaxed, and the back and head should be placed straight, but not in a rigid manner. Loose comfortable clothing would allow the body to relax better.

Procedure

- Sit comfortably spending few moments relaxing and sitting in.
- The hands must be placed gently on the lap and the fingers of both the hands must be inter-locked.
- If you prefer sitting on a chair then cross the legs at the ankles.
- Close the eyes softly.
- Close the in-breath and the out-breath.
- If the breath is long, notice that it is long. If the breath is short, notice that it is short.
- Do not try to change the pattern of breathing. Concentrate on the rhythm of breathing.
- When a thought comes, just observe it and do not get attached to the thought. One should never try to control thoughts.
- This will gradually lead you into a thoughtless state or no mind state.

When to meditate

Anytime is good, but the best time is the time that works best in your schedule. You can try out different timing in a day and fix an appropriate time according to your schedule. It should become a habit in our life in order to reap maximum benefits out of meditation. For the beginners, a calm and quiet atmosphere is needed to move into deeper meditation, and so the early morning time and late evening time may be preferred. Meditation soon after an intense exercise makes the body more relaxed and receptive. Short meditation in between work will help to increase the energy, concentration and creativity. Students can meditate before their studies to improve their concentration and performance. Do not meditate immediately after a heavy meal.

Where to meditate

For meditation, all you need is a right frame of mind and there is no special place that you need for it. However, it is true that certain places are more conducive for meditation than others. Meditation in forest, mountains, pyramids, water bodies and in the presence of water bodies are more powerful, but not essential for the practice of meditation. When you take the same place for meditation regularly, the place or room is tuned with the positive vibrations and becomes more conducive for meditation. Meditation is best done in darkness, especially for the beginners.

All external distractions should be avoided. Let your family members and friends know that you are meditating so that they don't disturb you during the meditation. Distractions affect in the beginning. Stage, but later on it will not affect you at all. The temperature of the room should neither be too hot nor too cold.

Meditation music can be used if one is comfortable with it. Burning some incense also helps to create a mental relaxation.

Facing towards east, placing woolen or silk blankets on floor to insulate body from subtle magnetic currents of earth etc., help in meditation, but you must remain alert that any ritual doesn't become an associative mental habit. In short, all you need is a clean, quiet place and some undisturbed time for practicing meditation.

How long to meditate

The science of meditation tells us that it takes some time for

the brain waves to kick in and modify the brain chemistry. Initially, meditation time should be directly proportional to a person's age in years, which means a 5-year-old child should meditate for 5 minutes and a 28-year-old person should meditate for 28 minutes. The timings can be slowly increased minute by minute and day by day.

Once comfortable and adapted in meditation, one can slowly increase the timing according to one's spiritual need.

Precautions

Meditation is having no restrictions as there are no side effects. However, those who are having mental illness should go slow on meditation under the guidance as it may agitate the mind.

Physical conditions like pregnancy, lactation, menstruation, or sickness etc., do not pose any barrier to meditation.

Non-vegetarian food, smoking and alcohol slow down the progress in meditation as it lowers the pranic energy level.

Initial Distracting Experiences for Beginners**External distractions:**

Sounds inside the room like the beeping watch, ticking of clock etc., or sounds from outside may cause a distraction. Using ear muffs helps in this type of disturbances.

Internal distractions:

Pain/Itching: it is a common experience for few in the beginning during meditation. It may be because of the push of cosmic energy or sitting long in the position. Pain due to cosmic energy surge will automatically go away when the blocks are removed. Adjusting the position and concentrating on the breath can slowly get rid of the postural pain.

Numbness of legs:

It is also called "falling asleep of legs" due to the squashing of the nerves, which cut off the nerve signals. It usually disappears when one learns to adjust and master an asana.

Physical restlessness:

It occurs due to hyper awareness into the body and can be avoided with breath awareness.

Mental distractions:

Mind usually flows outwards. Thoughts increase in the mind especially when one is not doing anything or is not occupied by any work. One should not fight the thoughts, but become aware of it and concentrate on the breathing.

Mental restlessness:

It is due to past memories and worry about future. It also can be taken care by becoming aware of the breath.

Unconscious sleep:

A person sleeps in meditation due to tiredness or Tamasic (bad lifestyle). The life style should be changed and proper sleep should be ensured.

Emotional distractions:

Every thought is concerned with some emotions. An emotion like fear, anger, jealousy, pride and sadness often follows our thoughts. Emotional awareness is the key to cross this barrier. Without getting connected to it, one can become aware of the emotions and transform it with a better

understanding.

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation gives multidimensional effect in our life. It can change and uplift our life in all angles. Some of the documented benefits include:

Physiological

Increased energy levels. Improved general health and immunity, reduced pain, improved breathing pattern, regulate blood pressure, faster healing, better homeostasis etc.

Psychological

Relaxation, stress relief, reduced anger, reduced anxiety, sharpened intellect, increased self-confidence etc.

Relationship/Interpersonal Benefits

Thoughtful response to day-to-day events, increased job satisfaction and performance, decreased aggressiveness, increased intimacy with loved ones, increased sense of responsibility, reduced rigidity, reduced resistance to life, death of wasteful habits.

Social benefits

Reduction in crime, reduction in violence, reduction in conflict, increased positivity, world peace.

Deep meditation experiences

As our meditation deepens, there are several mystical experiences that one would come across. These are a direct result of the abundant flow of cosmic energy into our pranamaya kosha or energy body. Different people experience this energy in different forms, and the experience varies from person to person. Some of the experiences are:

Physical:

Heaviness of body, lightness of body, body movements, warmth, and cold shivers etc.

Auditory:

Mystical sounds of Om, bells, veena, conch, flute, hissing thunder etc.

Divine fragrances: These may be of flowers, incense which are unfamiliar or unidentifiable.

Taste:

Sweet, bitter or salty taste is felt on the tongue in some people.

Creeping movements up the spine, changing breathing patterns, third eye experiences like visions of light, colours, deities, past life recalls, astral experiences etc., are a few of the other experiences.

All these experiences are not at all frightening, but motivate one to continue the path of meditation to acquire expanded consciousness or higher wisdom. However,

Research findings and Review of literature

Regular practice of breathing meditation can provide benefits such as a reduction in stress, increased calmness and clarity, as well as happiness [1]. It involves more attention to present thoughts, sensations, and emotions [2].

Breath meditation give a greater sense of control; increased self-awareness; a greater sense of calm, peace, and

happiness; and greater resilience in stressful times [3]. Beside with this found that could be effective in reducing the level of pain intensity. It should be further researched as an alternative to option in people with chronic pain conditions like fibromyalgia, migraines [4], and lower back pain. One of the research found that it provides cancer support, recommends [5] breath meditation for clients who are undergoing treatments at their facility. Their clients find that the benefits of mindful breathing meditation can reduce symptoms, as it relieves pain and has fewer side effects than chemotherapy, including less nausea, fatigue, anxiety, and increased immune system functioning. Breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, digestive system, normalizes heart rate and blood pressure, it helps to reduce anxiety in the process [6]. Burnout is common for adults to feel burnt out from their jobs. Mindful breathing can reduce burnout, cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety [7]. Practice of breath awareness can decrease negative automatic thoughts, which can be common in people with depression. Mindful breathing can make way for a better mood [8]. In Roy and colleagues research found a rapid increase in the number of interactive mindfulness design for health and wellbeing. In contrast, one small research has been published on developing frameworks for the design and evaluation of digital technologies.

Tested a physical-digital mindfulness [9] prototype that included the use of vapor and light. Results of the first phase showed that 22 of 25 participants (88%) claimed vapor and light could be effective ways of promoting mindful breathing and that the use of vapor could potentially support mindful breathing better than light (especially for beginners). The researchers concluded that the use of stress reduction tools should be customized and that the design technology for stress reduction is a complex process.

Conclusion

The breath is the life force, gives life; as inhale, it brings oxygen to cells; when exhale, release waste products in the form of carbon dioxide. Different types of breathing affect our body differently; rhythmic breathing balances the nervous system. Practicing breath meditation is gently focusing attention on the breath. Begin noticing the breath coming in and going out. Merely aware of the breath from moment to moment. Then feeling is healthy, happy, energetic, calmness and settled life.

References

1. Catherine S. Focused and fearless: A meditator's guide to states of deep joy, calm, and clarity. Accessible Publishing Systems, 2010.
2. Feldman G, Greeson J, Senville J. Differential effects of mindful breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and loving-kindness meditation on decentering and negative reactions to repetitive thoughts. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*. 2010; 48(10):1002-1011.
3. Joyce S, Shand F, Bryant RA, Lal TJ, Harvey SB. Mindfulness-based resilience training in the workplace: Pilot study of the internet-based Resilience@ Work (RAW) mindfulness program. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. 2018; 20(9).
4. Kar PC, Shian-Ling K, Chong CK. Mindful-STOP: Mindfulness made easy for stress reduction in medical students. *Education in Medicine Journal*. 2014; 6(2):48-56.

5. Roy A, Druker S, Hoge EA, Brewer JA. Physician anxiety and burnout: Symptom correlates and a prospective pilot study of app-delivered mindfulness training. *JMIR Mhealth and Uhealth*. 2020; 8(4):1-10.
6. Smith Center for Healing and the Arts. (n.d.). Practice #2: Mindful breathing meditation. Retrieved from <https://smithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/files/downloads/mindful-breathing-meditation.pdf>
7. Vago DR, Silbersweig DA. Self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-transcendence (S-ART): A framework for understanding the neurobiological mechanisms of mindfulness. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 2012, 6.
8. Zeidan F, Vago D. Mindfulness meditation-based pain relief: A mechanistic account. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 2016; 1373(1):114-127.
9. Zhu B, Hedman A, Feng S, Li H, Osika W. Designing, prototyping, and evaluating digital mindfulness applications: A case study of mindful breathing for stress reduction. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. 2017; 19(6).