

Live Well to
Learn Well

Web:
health.cornell.edu

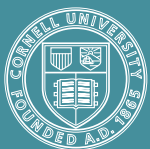
Phone (24/7):
607-255-5155

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607-255-0269

Appointments:
Monday–Saturday

Check web for hours,
services, providers,
and appointment
information

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Ithaca, NY
14853-3101



Meditate! It's Great for Mind & Body

Why meditate?

Over 1,000 scientific studies have provided evidence that meditation is beneficial to our well-being— physically, emotionally, mentally. Among the many potential benefits, meditation may:

Increase: brain size and grey matter; productivity; intelligence and creativity; self-esteem; alertness; contentment

Create: deeper levels of relaxation; positive health habits; intentional time for self-care and awareness

Improve: memory, attention, and focus; breathing; the immune system; physical and mental health; grades and work habits; blood sugar levels; energy; sleep patterns

Lessen or reduce: pain, depression, stress; dependence on cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs; lower blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol and the buildup of plaque in coronary arteries; binge eating; doctor's visits, illness

What is meditation?

Meditation is simply a form of contemplation. And while some people see it as an act of shutting down, it's actually an active process.

Meditation may take many forms. Its universal foundation lies in being able to focus on one thing or object at a time in order to quiet the body and the mind.

The heart of meditation lies not simply in focusing on one object but rather on cultivating an ability to re-focus when the mind has drifted to other thoughts.

Meditation can be done in many different ways. Some people do it while sitting still. Others do it through repetitive movements such as walking, biking, paddling a kayak, drawing— anything that allows you to focus your attention on the present moment and release thoughts and feelings as they arise.

Meditation doesn't require a specific (or any) spiritual belief, and many people of different religions practice meditation without conflict with their beliefs. Tuning into oneself to experience inner quiet is not religious by nature.

Keep in mind

It does not take years of meditation to deliver benefits. The benefits can be immediate and long-term. Meditation is typically easier/more successful when you detach from "trying to get it right." Instead, just be present to what is.

LET'S MEDITATE

weekly guided mindfulness meditation series

Individuals who meditate seem to feel better, do better, and find that the practice sustains them in their personal and professional lives.

Weekly guided meditation sessions—in a dozen campus locations—offer FREE half-hour opportunities for all members of the Cornell community to practice a relaxing and restorative technique supported by scientific research.

- **Everyone is welcome:** Open to students, faculty, and staff of all ages, genders, sizes, shapes, and abilities.
- **Come as you are:** Dress comfortably.
- No sign-up necessary: **Just come!**
- Participation is **FREE**

Get the current schedule:
health.cornell.edu/meditate

Cornell
Health

The logo of Cornell University, featuring a shield with a book and a sun, surrounded by the text "CORNELL UNIVERSITY" and "FOUNDED A.D. 1826".

Look for a campus meditation location near you.

The benefits of meditation occur even when you are noticing the "chatter of your mind." Like any skill, mastering one's mind takes practice. Enjoy any moments of pure silence or peace that arise amid the chatter, and build upon those. Even a few minutes of meditation daily is better than none at all.

Those who practice meditation regularly feel they are able to accomplish more while doing (or trying) less.

Working with troubled thoughts

Although people typically find meditation deeply relaxing, it is not uncommon to experience an occasional troubling thought that elicits physical sensations of anxiety. This may include an increased pulse, shakiness, uneasiness, or sweating—natural results of even minor changes in your breath that your body may have misinterpreted as a response to real danger (i.e. your body kicked off an unnecessary "fight or flight" response).

If this happens, you can provide your brain with an "all clear" signal by consciously initiating a series of slow, deep breaths. Try a 10-count breath: in through your nose for a count of 4, then hold your breath while you think "pause," and slowly release your breath through your mouth, counting 5–10.

Performing this practice ensures that your belly expands with each inhalation (breathing in low and deep) rather than performing more shallow “chest breathing.”

If you repeat the process for approximately 10 breaths, your brain will naturally turn its relaxation response back on and you can return to the meditation process.

Other individuals who begin meditating may find that when they take time to tune-in and become quiet, they are more aware of the thoughts or experiences they have been “stuffing” or “pushing down.” Such information is important to attend to, whether it means writing in a journal, talking with a friend, or reaching out for support from a campus support resource.

Meditation resources

Consider these opportunities:

- **“Let’s Meditate” weekly guided mindfulness meditations:** This seated meditation practice involves actively attending to, noticing, and focusing in on the present moment. Guided sessions are available at a dozen sites across campus: health.cornell.edu/meditate.
- **Other campus meditations:** Different styles of meditation are available across campus. Learn more at: health.cornell.edu/meditate.
- **Unguided solo meditation:** Sit comfortably (in a chair or on the floor) with your back straight. Feel the physical support beneath your body.

With your eyes closed, take several deep breaths through your nose, releasing bodily tension on the out-breath.

Focus your attention on your breath, a word, or an image.

Observe without judgment any thoughts or emotions that arise; release them with the next exhale.

Return your attention to your breath, word, or image. Begin with 5-10 minutes and gradually increase to 20-30 minutes a day.

- **Internet-facilitated meditation:** Search Google or Youtube for the following items:
 - Greg de Vries “10 min. body scan”
 - Jon Kabat Zinn “Mindsight” or “Guided Sitting Meditation”
 - Tara Brach Audio Archives
 - Gaiam Life Meditation Room
 - UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center Guided Meditations

Other support

On-campus:

- **Cornell Health counselors:** 607-255-5155; professional counseling and support for registered Cornell students; health.cornell.edu/CAPS
- **Cornell Center for Intercultural Dialogue:** 607-255-3693; promotes programs that cross the boundaries in Cornell’s diverse community
- **Cornell Minds Matter (CMM):** promotes overall mental and emotional health of all registered Cornell students; orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/cornellmindsmatter
- **EARS peer counseling:** 607-255-3277; peer support for Cornell undergraduate, graduate, and professional students; ears.dos.cornell.edu
- **Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP):** 607-255-2673; confidential consultation and support for Cornell staff, faculty, retirees, and post-docs; fsap.cornell.edu
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center:** 607-255-4406; wide variety of resources and information about the LGBT community at Cornell; dos.cornell.edu/lgbt-resource-center
- **Women’s Resource Center:** 607-255-0015; provides a safe space to access resources, ask questions, and get to know more about available services; dos.cornell.edu/womens-resource-center

Off-campus:

- **The Advocacy Center:** 607-277-5000; local 24/7 phone support and resources related to relationship violence and sexual assault
- **Crisis Line:** 607-272-1616; local 24/7 confidential (or anonymous) hotline service sponsored by Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services.