

Meditation: A Simple, Fast Way to Cure Your Negative Emotions

PREMIUM MEDITATION



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Meditation can be a safe and effective way to help us control our [emotions](#), alleviate our mood disorders, and improve our [emotional intelligence](#) (EI).

Hu Naiwen is an internationally renowned traditional Chinese medicine doctor. Now in his mid-70s, he is still seeing patients.

He used to be quick-tempered and very impatient when speaking with his young son at dinnertime. After a long day in his clinic, he would often get angry at trivial things. But [meditation](#) changed him, he said. After meditating regularly, his mind gradually became calmer and he became less prone to anger. According to him, another benefit of meditation is excellent sleep quality at night, which also helps him concentrate on his work during the day.

What Are the Emotional Effects of Meditation?

Reduce Negative Thoughts and Feelings

In [one study](#), the participants were asked to list their thoughts while viewing negative images (e.g., a dead cat in the middle of the road). People who meditated listed proportionately fewer negative thoughts.

In another [study conducted at Michigan State University](#), 68 female participants were divided into two groups, with one group listening to an 18-minute guided meditation session, and the other group listening to an 18-minute TED talk on language learning.

Then they were instructed to view some neutral or negatively arousing pictures. The study found that the meditation session helped the first group to tame their negative emotions, as there was a significant reduction in their response to negative things.

Reduce Anger and Fear

As demonstrated by Hu's experience, meditation can manage anger. According to [one study](#), anger reduction can be achieved by a single meditation session, as demonstrated by slower breathing and heart rate, and decreased blood pressure.

Meditation can also help people reduce fear. For example, many cancer survivors fear cancer recurrence, and this fear can have negative impacts on their daily life, work, and relationships. As per [a systematic review](#), mind-body interventions (including different forms of meditation) are effective for significantly reducing the fear of cancer recurrence.

Boost Positive Feeling

In one study, 25 participants [practiced group meditation](#) three times a week for four weeks, with each session lasting around 30 minutes. They experienced significant improvement in positive emotions, interpersonal interactions, and complex understanding of others, compared to people who didn't meditate.

Increase Compassion

People can join others in meditating together, thus creating a sense of community and increasing feelings of empathy and compassion.

According to [another study](#), meditation helped 153 people reduce loneliness, increase social contact with others, and generate compassion toward other people.

In [one study](#), 210 university students were randomly assigned into three groups that performed different tasks—practice meditation, listen to music, or listen to a lecture. After two sessions were completed, 50.8 percent of participants in the meditation group showed a willingness to help others, whereas only 31.2 percent and 31 percent of students in the music and lecture groups were willing to help.

The researchers concluded that even a brief meditation practice can increase people's help-giving intention.

Increase Self-Esteem

Also, according to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), low self-esteem can be linked to mental health issues. And meditation can help us become more confident and have higher self-esteem, as it trains our minds to become calmer and clearer. In addition, as we become more compassionate toward others, we can be more compassionate toward ourselves. This is achieved as we become more self-aware through practicing meditation, and thus we can better accept and embrace ourselves.

Meditation Can Improve Emotional Disorders

The National Institute of Mental Health states that [21.4 percent](#) of American adults are estimated to experience an emotional disorder sometime during their lifetime.

Meditation has been proven to be effective in improving the symptoms of several emotional disorders.

According to a study ([pdf](#)), meditation can help students with emotional/behavioral disorders regulate their emotions. The study took place in a self-contained school for adolescents with emotional problems such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and adult attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Mindfulness activities, including meditation, were integrated into these students' daily activities for six weeks. Afterward, the students became more optimistic, adaptable, and focused, and had a greater sense of self-efficacy, while their emotional reactivity decreased significantly.

Several of them also expressed their wishes to continue these mindfulness exercises in a classroom setting throughout the school year.

1. Emotional Disturbance

Emotional disturbance is a severe emotional disorder that can cause clinically significant distress to interfere with a patient's functioning in society. [Symptoms of emotional disturbance](#) can include hyperactivity, aggressive behaviors, social withdrawal, property destruction, temper tantrums, and learning difficulties.

[One study](#) shows that meditation can help prevent and manage socially inappropriate and harmful behaviors among primary/elementary students with emotional disturbance and behavioral problems. Five students participated in this 10-week program of mindfulness meditation practices, and 80 percent (four) of them showed a decrease in noncompliance after its completion.

Also, the children were increasingly aware of and paid attention to their emotions, which helped curb their inappropriate behaviors, such as aggression toward others and self-injurious behaviors.

2. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

[Seasonal affective disorder](#) is a type of depression most often associated with fewer hours of sunlight during the fall and winter months. However, it can also take place in the spring and summer.

Meditation can [activate the pineal gland](#), releasing melatonin that can [improve depressive symptoms](#). Meditation can also [increase serotonin levels](#), which can also help with SAD.

Currently, the most effective [treatment methods for SAD](#) include cognitive behavioral therapy, antidepressants, and light therapy.

However, according to [one study](#), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), a therapy that involves meditation, can be more effective at preventing episodes of SAD than light therapy. Sixty-five percent of the MBCT group participants developed depression in the upcoming winter compared to 78 percent of those who developed it in the treatment-as-usual (TAU) group, which got to participate in light therapy.

Additionally, in a survey conducted in [several German-speaking countries](#), some psychiatric institutions indicated that they had already recommended meditation as an alternative preventive measure to their SAD patients.

3. Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD)

[Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder](#) is a condition of chronic and persistent irritability and frequent and intense temper outbursts in children or adolescents. It is common in [people with ADHD](#).

[MBCT](#) and other mindful exercises are an effective and safe alternative approach to treating mood-dysregulated adolescents.

In [one study](#), several ADHD patients attended weekly meditation training sessions of two-and-a-half hours each for eight weeks. The patients reported that they were better able to stay focused, and their symptoms of emotion dysregulation improved.

4. Dysthymia

Dysthymia is a chronic depressive mood disorder characterized by persistent but low-grade depression.

According to [one study](#), 50 dysthymic patients were assigned into two groups, with one group receiving eight weekly MBCT treatment sessions and medication, which involved meditation exercises, and the other receiving only medication. After receiving the treatment, the MBCT group's depression scores considerably decreased, and participants' ability to regulate emotions also significantly improved, in comparison with the other group.

Other emotional disorders, including depressive disorder, bipolar, and anxiety disorder, are also mental diseases that can be improved by meditation.

Practicing Meditation Can Increase Our EI

Meditation can even improve our EI, or emotional intelligence. According to a [systematic review](#) in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, EI is an individual's ability to control and manage his/her emotions and to understand and influence those of others. An [emotional quotient](#) (EQ), on the other hand, is like an IQ in that it is a testing measurement that indicates an ability to understand our own emotional minds.

According to the review, mindfulness meditation can promote the development of health care professionals' EI, which in turn would lead to greater job satisfaction and retention, as well as better care provided to patients.

There are several ways in which meditation can boost our EI. It helps us:

1. Control Our Emotions

When people speak of someone with “low EQ,” they sometimes mean that this particular person has trouble controlling emotions (e.g., the person flares up easily).

As mentioned, meditation is an excellent tool to help us regulate emotions, so we can carry on in our daily lives with a calm mind. And meditation can reduce our stress, which can often trigger anger.

2. Understand Our Emotions

If we practice meditation, we will naturally and gradually develop self-awareness, which is the ability to recognize and understand our feelings and thoughts. When we meditate, ideally, we take time and space to block out external influences and focus on our own minds.

Once we become self-aware, it's easier for us to manage our feelings and thoughts, thus keeping us composed and collected and improving our EI.

3. Understand Other People's Emotions

Meditation can help increase our pro-social dispositions, including compassion, empathy, and forgiveness toward ourselves and others.

As we become more compassionate and caring toward others, we recognize their vibes, energy, body language, social cues, and facial expressions more accurately. Therefore, we can understand others' emotions better.



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