

Wellness from Within - June 2006

Meditation made simple - By Jennifer Powers

Meditation has been widely known to enhance mental health and restore emotional balance. However, it is most effective when practiced on a regular basis. This can sometimes be difficult given the busy lifestyle and growing responsibilities we are faced with daily. All hope is not lost for those who wish to reap the benefits of meditation but just can't seem to fit it in their full schedule. The alternative is "active meditation".

This form of meditation helps you bring mindfulness to your everyday life. The concept is simple. Instead of speeding through our days on auto pilot we give ourselves an opportunity to "check in" with what we are doing and how we are feeling about it. To practice this try to focus on each activity with full consciousness, without thinking or doing anything else. Eliminate all distractions that might normally take your full attention away from the task at hand. Doing one thing at a time (even if it is not that fun) gives you the opportunity to recognize some exciting aspects about that activity that you might never have tuned in to. It can also improve your performance and save time by reducing the chance for error. Being mindful in your actions is the first step in eliminating the unnecessary stress and anxiety from your busy day.

As a continuation, take one minute out of every hour to stop what you are doing, concentrate on your breathing and connect with your emotional state. By taking stock in your emotions on a regular basis you are able to reset and avoid a back-up of negativity that might grow out of control if harbored till the end of the day. Try this: For sixty seconds each hour take long, deep breaths to the abdomen and on the exhale "release" any stress, frustration or conflict that may have found its way inside your mind. Oftentimes these feelings translate into tight chest muscles and tense shoulders. Make a conscious effort to unleash this pressure from your body by softening your chest and dropping your shoulders downward on the exhale of each breath.

This one simple practice can substantially eliminate the stress we accumulate throughout the day, leaving us with more energy and a positive outlook for our personal time after work.

Active meditation is something you can begin to practice immediately. With persistence you will find that the feeling of being present in all you do is not only one you desire, but one you absolutely deserve.

QUOTABLE QUOTE: "Focus on now and embrace it, for it is fleeting."