

Quiet Mind

So why quiet our minds when there is an abundance of seemingly more urgent things to do? My experience tells me that it is in the rest that we get better, not the work.

Great athletes know rest is the only time their muscles restore, heal and grow. In the training, they know their muscles get depleted and breakdown. Our brain is the most complex structure in the known universe. It needs our care.

What's new is that we can take steps to exercise our mind. While being the quietest exercise going, brain fitness is a real thing. The act of paying attention to our breath calms our mind and specifically the act of coming back to the breath after our mind naturally wanders is the sit up or push up for our neurons. Other attributes of taking some time to quiet our mind are **reduced stress, higher brain functioning, increased immune function, lowered blood pressure, lowered heart rate, increased awareness, increased attention and focus, Increased clarity in thinking and perception, lowered anxiety levels, experience of being calm and internally still, experience of feeling connected.**

I am focusing on a form of quieting the mind called mindfulness which is the basic natural human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not be overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. Jon Kabat-Zinn who was instrumental in modernizing what is a very old practice defines mindfulness as a non-judgmental, moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.

Exercise

- Find a few times during the day to take 3 deep breaths and long exhales. Could be on the way to a meeting, in the elevator, in a traffic jam, on public transit, in a washroom. Think of transition (going to things or between events) times as opportunities for a micro-break for your mind.
- Try 3 mornings of 7 for 3 minutes each.
- Then try 5 mornings of 7 for 5 minutes each.
- Then try 7 mornings of 7 for 7 minutes each.

Success Boosters:

- Dwell on what you did do ... not on what you didn't do. Like if you purposefully took 3 deep breaths in a day and hadn't done that before, then celebrate it!
- Mornings are best. Right after getting up is a great time to quiet our mind.

Write down your goal somewhere. Like, "I am meditating 3 x this week for 3 minutes."