

## **Meditation: A Stress Management Technique**

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### **Abstract**

21<sup>st</sup> century is facing various drastic changes. Due to increase in modernization and technological advancements masses have to face various challenges in day to day life. While facing these challenges they experience stress. Stress causes anxiety, restlessness, decrease in decision making power and work capacity. Due to incompetence in handling this stress they have to face different mental and physical problems. So there is a need to make efforts towards releasing the stress. Meditation is one of the best stress management technique. Meditation is a practice where an individual uses a technique, such as focusing their mind on a particular object, thought or activity, to achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm state. Meditation helps in releasing stress and keeps us mentally and physically fit.

**KEYWORDS:** Meditation, Stress Management, Eustress, Distress

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### **Introduction**

21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of various changes. The rapid changes in information sources, knowledge science and technology is the main characteristic of this century. It is inevitable to adjust with these changes. Every person tries to cope with these changes in his/her own way. But everybody have varied capacity. They face different challenges depending on the environment. Sometimes they succeed in managing those situations but sometimes not. Difficult situation or failure may have negative side effect on every person. When faced with difficulties again and again, people go through pressure, worries and sadness. Such negative thoughts if not checked on time develops into stress.

### **What is Stress?**

‘Stress’ word is derived from ‘Strictus’ meaning tight or narrow from latin origin. Stress is a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs. Hans Selye (1936) first coined the term ‘Stress’ through the study of natural sciences and defined it as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. While interacting with the environment in various difficult situations stress is experienced, in the same way due to stress one have to face those difficult situations. Morgan along with his associates (1992) refers to stress as “stress is many faceted process that occurs in us in response to events that disrupt or

threaten to disrupt our physical or psychological functioning.” According to Lazarus (1966) “stress exists when the demand on a person are perceived as taxing or exceeding that person’s adjustive capacity.” Dunbar (1947) regarded stress as a quality of the stimuli while Alexander (1950) defined it both as quality of the stimuli and individual’s response to it.

## **Types of Stress**

Depending upon the nature and intensity stress can be classified into **eustress** and **distress**:

**Eustress** is term for positive stress. It is related to successful handling of difficult situations. As it is perceived within the scope of our abilities it leads to better performance and better opportunities toward growth and development.

**Distress** is used for negative stress. This type of stress is characterized by anxiety, concern, worry, fear etc. This lead to psychological and physiological imbalance. It is perceived as outside the scope of our abilities.

### **Effect of stress on performance.**

There is a relationship between the degree of stress and the level of performance. The performance increases with increase in stress upto certain level. Then as the stress increases the performance starts decreasing as per individual's capacity to handle extreme stress.

### **Physical Effects**

- 1) Insomnia
- 2) Frequent headaches, respiratory problems
- 3) Tiredness
- 4) Unstable blood pressure and heart rate

### **Psychological Effects**

- 1) Bad decision making
- 2) Mood swings
- 3) Developing fears and phobias
- 4) Difficulty in concentrating

If all of these above mentioned negative effects of stress are not brought under control in time, may cause severe mental or physical diseases. A person may fall prey to chronic depression due to prolonged effects of stress.

To relieve ourselves from stress and handling it in a positive way there is a need to make changes in our lives. There is a need to adapt various techniques to counter stress and lead a healthy life.

### **Stress Management through Meditation**

Meditation is relaxation. Meditation can be defined as a practice where an individual uses a technique, such as focusing their mind on a particular object, thought or activity, to achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm state. It's not about focusing one's thoughts on one thing, but instead on becoming thoughtless.

Meditation is a precise technique for resting the mind and attaining a state of consciousness that is totally different from the normal waking state. Meditation is a

science, which means that the process of meditation follows a particular order, has definite principles, and produces results that can be verified.

Meditation involves simple steps. First preparing mentally by saying 'I am ready'. Sit in proper posture. Concentrate on your breathing by taking deep breaths. Then silencing the senses and silencing mind. Final step is meditation awakening. Practicing this process at least once per day is beneficial for stress relief.

### **Physical Benefits**

With meditation, the physiology changes. As an individual becomes regular with practicing meditation, there is a visible increase in joy, peace, and enthusiasm. This happens because of the increased life force in the body.

- 1) Increased strength of immune system
- 2) Reduced anxiety attacks
- 3) Decreases tension-related pain, namely headaches, ulcers, insomnia, muscle and joint problems
- 4) Controlled blood pressure

### **Mental Benefits**

- 1) Better decision making capability
- 2) Improves communication skill
- 3) Gains courage to face problems
- 4) Controls depression by balancing neurochemical systems.

The overall benefits of meditations include a calm mind, enhanced concentration, improved clarity and communication, relaxation of mind and body. Regular practice of meditation has a profound impact on the core three areas of our existence - physical, mental, and spiritual.

### **Conclusion**

Thus we have seen that through meditation, an individual can be benefited in numerous way. Accepting a healthy lifestyle by including meditation in day to day routine one can help manage stress. Meditation keeps our mind healthy and healthy mind plays a key role in overcoming all of our problems and helps in leading a stress free life.

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