



A bite-sized newsletter about men's lifestyle



Meditation - An Ancient Practice for Today's Modern Man

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The identity of today's "modern man" is particularly complex. Facing a shifting world with global pandemics, work-from-home jobs, online classes, and a social life dominated by technology, men are reporting alarming levels of loneliness and one of the most precipitous declines in general mental health quality seen in decades. Ironically, these alarming trends occur amidst a societal climate that acknowledges and promotes mental health awareness more than ever before. Add in the proliferation of growing wellness movements like self-betterment and the growth mindset, and today's "modern man" is drowning in muddled waters.

Talk Therapy, medication, productivity hacks, cold plunges, CEO morning routines, mushroom superfood supplements; everywhere you look, there's a product with a celebrity spokesperson promising you the success and well-being you so passionately desire. Yet it's plain to see, despite all the awareness and flashy new wellness trends, that men of today are falling further away from the personal growth and mental health control they seek. The fully actualized "modern man" should be a blend of both past and present, pairing previous experience with modern wisdom. And while our particular realities are starkly different from those of our predecessors, there is wisdom from the past to be applied today. Chief among them - the mastery of one's own mind.



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Enter meditation. An ancient spiritual practice intended to promote mindfulness, mental clarity, physical well-being, self-discovery, focus, and relaxation, meditation is often seen as a strictly spiritual endeavor, complete with hours of solemn contemplation and years of experience required to reap its benefits. This often creates a bit of a branding problem, causing the practice to go overlooked in the face of quick-fix modern trends. In an ever-changing world, the tools we use must change alongside our circumstances, and meditation's ability to do just that makes it a vital weapon in the "modern man's" arsenal. Below are three of the advantages meditation holds over other wellness practices.

1. Variety

- Due to its ancient nature, there are dozens of unique meditation styles, each with a different approach, guidelines, and goals. Because of this, you can routinely change which type you practice based on the unique situation or challenge you face. Stress at work on Monday? Focus for your hobby on Friday? Empathy before family dinner on Sunday? There's a meditation practice for each of these and more.

2. Adaptability

- Along with its variety of iterations, meditation is a uniquely adaptable tool. The length of your practice can change depending on your schedule or need, the environment you choose to practice in can fluctuate to accommodate for the unexpected, and even the specific techniques you focus on can adapt over time to develop new strengths, allowing you to build a bespoke meditation practice to fit your life.

3. Track Record

- Most importantly, meditation has a proven track record. It has centuries of documented experiences and testament, current scientific examination, and even modern celebrity endorsements from the likes of Steve Jobs, Kobe Bryant, and Oprah, to name a few.

So, with all this information in mind, where do you start?

1. First, take some time to consider what you'd like to accomplish from beginning a meditation practice. It's important to note that your goal can change as often as you'd like, but the type of meditation you practice may need to change to maximize your desired effect. Below, you'll find a list of several, but not all, types of meditation. Choose one to focus on based on your current needs, and research the primary tenets, techniques involved, and requirements to give yourself a working foundation.



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- For - Stress Reduction: Mindfulness Meditation, Metta Meditation
 - Mindfulness helps you become aware of stressors and manage them more effectively and increase energy.
 - Metta meditation fosters self-compassion and reduces stress.
- For - Anxiety: Mindfulness Meditation, Guided Meditation
 - Mindfulness can help manage anxious thoughts by increasing present-moment awareness.
 - Guided meditation provides specific relaxation guidance.
- For - Depression: Metta Meditation
 - Promotes feelings of compassion and self-worth.
- For - Sleep Problems: Body Scan Meditation, Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Body scan and progressive muscle relaxation techniques help relax the body, reduce tension, and improve sleep quality.
- For - Enhancing Focus and Concentration: Concentration Meditation, Zen Meditation
 - Concentration meditation cultivates mental discipline and improves the ability to focus on a single point or object. Can improve cognition, increase attention control, and reduce mental clutter.
- For - Boosting Creativity: Open Awareness Meditation
 - Open awareness meditation encourages a receptive mindset, allowing creative ideas to flow naturally. Can improve mindfulness and foster creative inspiration.
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- For - Improving Relationships: Metta Meditation
 - Metta meditation helps develop compassion and empathy, which can improve interactions with others. Can reduce reactivity and improve communication.
- For - Emotional Regulation: Mindfulness Meditation, Transcendental Meditation
 - Mindfulness meditation teaches you to observe emotions without judgment, leading to better emotional regulation.
- For - Spiritual Growth: Transcendental Meditation
 - TM meditation can lead to a sense of transcendence and spiritual growth.
- For - Physical Pain Management: Mindfulness Meditation, Body Scan Meditation
 - These meditation techniques help individuals observe and cope with physical discomfort, reducing the perception of pain and renewing energy.



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2. Next, set a timeframe that works for you. This can be as short as 5 minutes or as long as a few hours. Starting out, 10-30 minutes is recommended, but you can regularly adjust your practice time depending on your schedule.

3. Then, limit your surrounding distractions. Mute your phone or put it in focus mode, silence other electronics, and separate yourself from others when possible. Find a comfortable, but not too comfortable, place where you feel calm and relaxed. Depending on your chosen practice, the directions from here will change. What is provided below is a general mindfulness meditation approach intended to give you a starting point.

4. Sit, close your eyes, quiet the mind, and begin.

5. As you sit, make sure to ground yourself in the present moment. Draw attention to your breath or how your body feels, anything that redirects you back to the now. Thoughts will repeatedly enter your mind. This is normal; note them without scolding yourself, and return your attention to the present moment, using whatever works best. Practice this re-focusing technique until your time is up. It may help to utilize guided meditation in the early stages of your practice to make the beginning of your learning process more manageable. Use your first several sessions as a trial period, adjusting the type, time, techniques, and specifics of your practice to make it work best for you. The suggestions listed above are intended to provide a framework and starting point for your practice and are completely adjustable and adaptable as you go.

Because of our digital world, there are countless meditation apps you can utilize for various things, such as tracking time, finding guided meditations, background sounds, helpful tips, and hundreds of different ways to practice. Three of the best free options are

- Meditio
- Insight Timer
- Healthy Minds

As you grow more experienced, you may choose to explore numerous other types of meditation and new techniques, which you can adapt to your practice as things change. What's most important is how you move forward. Make meditation a regular habit, start small, and set a daily reminder if needed, but be realistic to not overwhelm yourself. Just get started. With some nurturing and consistency, the "modern man" can learn from looking back and utilize meditation to unlock growth and success moving forward.