# **The Top Mental Health Benefits of Meditation**

Over the last several years, more and more people have started practicing meditation as a way to stave off stress and health problems related to stress. When you start practicing meditation on a regular basis, your brain's physiology changes. This mental shift helps to decrease the harmful effects of stress, mild depression, and anxiety. Here are the top three mental health benefits of practicing meditation on a regular basis.

## Preserves the Aging Brain

Various studies of the last several years have revealed that when you are in your 20s, your brain begins to decline. This reduction in volume and weight continues throughout your life. Practicing meditation on a daily basis can help prevent many of the neurodegenerative diseases, like Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and dementia. It can also help to stave off the cognitive decline that comes with age.

Meditating regularly can also help to increase the protective tissues in your brain. When you engage in meditation, you're introduced to states of intense relaxation and concentration which leads to the growth of new cells. This helps to protect against shrinkage of your grey matter.

## Reduces Stress

One of the main reasons why people practice the art of meditation is to find relief from depression, stress, and anxiety. Regular meditation practice helps to reduce the levels of stress and depression, both physically and mentally. When you experience stress or a sudden threat, your body enters into a flight or fight mode. This leads to an immediate rush of adrenaline, which can cause an increase in your blood pressure, pulse rate, and increase blood flow. Meditation helps to relieve these symptoms of stress.

Training your mind through the various meditation techniques works to increase the mental resources that can help you address stress and depression-related symptoms. The mind become clearer, more focused, and calmer, which automatically leads to the reduction of stress.

## Improve Attention

In just over a decade, researchers have measured a decline in our average attention span, from 12 seconds to only eight seconds. That's a whopping 33 percent decrease, and just one second shorter than the attention span of a goldfish. Practicing meditation can help improve your attention span, by optimizing the flow of sensory information that your brain takes in. Meditation helps to make your brain much more efficient at processing information.

If the hectic pace of today’s 24/7 society has your mind reeling, starting a regular practice of meditation can help. With just ten minutes a day, you can start seeing a reduction in your stress levels and an increase in your overall attention span.