

THE ROLE OF MEDITATION OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IN COMMON PEOPLE: A REVIEW ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress is a pervasive psychophysiological response that, when prolonged, adversely affects physical health, emotional balance, and overall quality of life. Meditation an ancient mind body practice rooted in diverse spiritual traditions and increasingly validated by contemporary science has emerged as an accessible and cost-effective strategy for stress management. Notably, the United Nations recognized 21 December 2024 as the first World Meditation Day, while the World Health Organization acknowledges meditation as a valuable self-care tool for enhancing well-being and managing anxiety-related symptoms.

Study and Materials: This qualitative review analyzes secondary data from 60 published review studies focusing exclusively on meditation-based interventions, excluding other yogic therapies. The findings indicate that practices such as mindfulness meditation, breathing meditation, focused attention, and cyclic meditation significantly reduce perceived stress, enhance emotional regulation, strengthen coping mechanisms, and improve sleep quality and psychological resilience. Evidence from neurophysiological investigations using EEG and fMRI further supports meditation's positive impact on brain function and mental health outcomes across clinical, educational, and occupational settings. Additionally, meditation fosters self-compassion, attention regulation, and adaptive behavioral responses, even when practiced for brief and low-cost sessions.

Conclusion: Although the accumulated evidence underscores meditation's effectiveness as a simple, practical, and inclusive approach to stress management among the general population, several studies highlight the need for more rigorous experimental designs with long-term follow-up to strengthen causal inferences. Overall, this review affirms meditation as an evidence-based, accessible intervention that can be integrated into daily routines and public health initiatives to promote mental well-being and emotional stability.

Key Words: Stress, psychophysiological response, Meditation and well-being

INTRODUCTION: According to UN. “a practice where an individual uses techniques such as mindfulness, focused attention, or concentrated thought to train the mind and achieve a state of mental clarity, emotional calmness, and physical relaxation”. United Nation recognised 21 December 2024 as the first World Meditation Day. According to WHO, “meditation can be a powerful self-care tool to support treatment and enhance overall well-being, particularly in managing symptoms of anxiety. Incorporating mindfulness meditation into your daily routine, even for just a few minutes, can help you achieve a sense of calm and focus”.

Patanjali's definition considers meditation and its obstacles, i.e., fluctuations of the mind. According to Patanjali, five types of fluctuations of mind should be overcome in order to attain concentration (meditation): (1) veridical cognition on the basis of perception, logical reasoning, and verbal communication, (2) illusory imagination, (3) linguistic conceptualizations, (4) sleep, and (5) memory (Woods, 1927/2003; Rao, 2011, p. xxx, 17ff).

Depending on the type of meditation you choose, you can meditate to relax, reduce anxiety and stress, and more. Some people even use meditation to help them improve their health, such as using it to help adapt to the challenges of quitting tobacco products.

The practice of meditation is thousands of years old, and different forms come from around the world. But modern science has only started studying this practice in detail during the last few decades. Some of the biggest leaps in science's understanding of meditation have only been possible thanks to modern technology.

On the outside, someone who's meditating might not seem to be doing anything other than breathing or repeating a sound or phrase over and over. Inside their brain, however, it's an entirely different story. Modern diagnostic and imaging techniques, like electroencephalography (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans, show that meditation can positively affect your brain and mental health.

- **Buddhist:** Several different forms of meditation have their origins in Buddhism (which is considered both a philosophy and a religion, especially depending on the nation of origin). Theravada meditation is more common in Southeast Asia, especially in India and Thailand. Zen Buddhist meditation originated in China, and different forms of it eventually evolved elsewhere, such as Japanese Zen Buddhist meditation. Tibetan Buddhist tantric meditation comes from the former nation of Tibet, now an autonomous region of China.
- **Christian:** Contemplation, which is when you focus intently on a question, idea, religious concept or deity, is a common practice in Christianity. Praying is often classified as meditation, especially when it takes this form.

Stress

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being. Stress can be positive - keeping you alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger. For example, if one has an important test coming up, a stress response might help the body work harder and stay awake longer. But stress becomes a problem when stressors continue without relief or periods of relaxation.

Types of stress: *There are three main kinds of stress: acute, episodic acute and chronic.*

- **Acute stress:** Acute stress is short-term stress that comes and goes quickly. It can be positive or negative. It's the feeling you get when you're riding on a rollercoaster or having a fight with your boyfriend. Everyone experiences acute stress from time to time.
- **Episodic acute stress:** Episodic acute stress is when you experience acute stress on a regular basis. With this kind of stress, you don't ever get the time you need to return to a calm, relaxed state. Episodic stress frequently affects people working in certain professions, like healthcare providers.
- **Chronic stress:** Chronic stress is long-term stress that goes on for weeks or months. You may experience chronic stress due to marriage troubles, issues at work or financial problems. It's important to find ways to manage chronic stress because it can lead to health issues. Here are some signs that stress may be affecting you: Diarrhoea or constipation, Forgetfulness, Frequent aches and pains, Headaches, Lack of energy or focus, Sexual problems, Stiff jaw or neck, Tiredness, Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much, Upset stomach, Use of alcohol or medicines to relax and Weight loss or gain.

Stress management through yogic meditation. Meditation is a technique used for thousands of years to develop awareness of the present moment. It can involve practices to sharpen focus and attention, connect to the body and breath, develop acceptance of difficult emotions, and even alter consciousness. While many spiritual traditions include meditation as a part of their teachings and practices, the technique itself doesn't belong to any particular religion or faith. Though ancient in origin, it's still practiced today in cultures all over the world to create a sense of peace, calm, and inner harmony. Meditation may offer a solution to the growing need to reduce stress in the midst of busy schedules and demanding lives. Although there isn't a right or wrong way to meditate, it's important to find a practice that meets your needs. There are nine popular types of meditation practice: mindfulness meditation, spiritual meditation, focused meditation, movement meditation, mantra meditation, transcendental meditation, progressive relaxation, loving-kindness meditation and visualization meditation

Aim: The aim of this study is to analyze and assess the usefulness of meditation as a straightforward, approachable, and useful technique for enhancing mental health and emotional equilibrium in everyday life.

Objective: The objective of the study is to review and analyze the literature on meditation techniques and how well they work to lower stress levels in regular individuals. It looks into how various types of meditation affect psychological health, emotional stability, and coping skills while assessing how useful, accessible, and applicable they are in daily life. The study also seeks to evaluate meditation's overall effectiveness as a stress-reduction technique and to pinpoint research gaps that call for additional study.

The Analysis of reviews from different findings of the authors is following in Table No. 1

Table No.1: Analysis of Reviews from different findings of the authors:

Sl. No.	Name of Author	Objectives of the Study	Findings and results
1.	Prem Sukh et al.(2023)	Meditation is a powerful practice that can be highly effective for managing stress.	Meditation encourages self-care and self-compassion, teaching you to treat yourself with kindness and understanding. By developing a compassionate attitude towards yourself, you can better manage stress and prevent self-criticism or burnout.
2.	James C Ovrholser et al.(2009)	To employ a biopsychosocial approach that looks at the biological, psychological, and social elements that affect stress and suffering in order to better understand and treat problems associated with extremely bad life events.	Stressful life situations can raise the likelihood of acquiring emotional and physical diseases. Psychological and social intervention techniques, which aim to improve social support and agency engagement while altering negative attitudes and maladaptive behaviors, seem to be more beneficial than pharmacological treatments.
3.	Kamalpreet Kaur (2014)	Meditation can promote inner calm and remove the tension of the day. Meditation can be used whenever we wish to lower stress levels at work. Meditation is a useful tool for managing feelings of tension, anxiety, and worry at work. Even a short meditation session might help you regain inner peace and tranquility.	Meditation reduces stress by calming anxious, tense, and worried feelings and restoring peace. Even a few minutes of practice enhances physical and emotional wellbeing. Because it is simple, inexpensive, and can be practiced anywhere, meditation is an effective stress-management technique in fast-paced work environments.
4.	Stevie-Jae Hepburn et al.(2017)	As complementary alternative medicine, yoga and meditation have been recommended to treat depression, anxiety, and stress. Whether or if	The results showed that the individuals felt less stressed than they had before. Benefits in both their personal and professional lives were reported by the participants.

		participants in a five-week pranayama meditation (yoga breathing) course felt any level of stress relief was the goal of the current exploratory, mixed-methods case study.	
5.	Renu Tomer et al.(2014)	To compare a meditation experimental group with a non-meditating control group using the Singh and Srivastava Stress Management Scale in order to investigate the impact of meditation on stress management among IBS patients between the ages of 20 and 40.	The findings demonstrated that patients who meditated had considerably better stress management than those in the non-meditating control group, suggesting that meditation helps IBS patients manage their stress.
6.	K Ranisha et al.(2024)	To assess the efficacy of cyclic meditation (CM) as a stress-management and wellbeing intervention technique by conducting a thorough evaluation of peer-reviewed research on the topic.	Cyclic meditation dramatically lowers stress and enhances general well-being across a variety of demographics, according to a study of 16 carefully chosen research. Although the results were consistent, firmer confirmation requires additional high-quality randomized controlled studies with long-term follow-ups.
7.	Yong Seng Yeath et al.(2024)	In addition to discussing the benefits of meditation techniques and postures, the article explains how mindfulness improves everyday life and soothes the mind.	Stress reduction, improved focus, sleep, emotional balance, memory, and the encouragement of calm, compassion, creativity, optimism, and resilience in daily life are all ways that meditation enhances mental and physical well-being.
8.	Gina Paul et al.(2007)	To implement and evaluate Deep Breathing Meditation curriculum for medical students to develop stress-	Students reported feeling less nervous about tests. Self-doubt and lack of focus applied the strategy outside of the classroom

		management skills and improve academic performance.	and felt it enhanced academic achievement and readiness for demanding work environments.
9.	John AAstin(1997)	To investigate how an eight-week mindfulness meditation stress-reduction program affects coping mechanisms and psychiatric symptoms.	In comparison to controls, participants displayed enhanced coping, a greater sense of control, fewer psychiatric symptoms, and more spiritual experiences, indicating that mindfulness meditation is a useful cognitive behavioral technique and relapse prevention method.
10.	Yune Sik Kang(2009)	To evaluate effectiveness of a mindfulness meditation stress coping program works for nursing students' stress, anxiety, and depression.	The program significantly reduced stress and anxiety but showed no significant effect on depression indicating mindfulness meditation is a useful stress-reduction strategy for nursing students.

Conclusion:

The present review highlights meditation as a practical, accessible, and evidence-informed approach to stress management among the general population. Drawing upon findings from 60 review-based studies, the analysis demonstrates that diverse meditation practices—including mindfulness, focused attention, breathing techniques, and cyclic meditation—consistently contribute to reductions in perceived stress, improved emotional regulation, enhanced coping capacity, better sleep quality, and strengthened psychological resilience. These benefits are observable across clinical, educational, and occupational contexts, indicating that meditation is not limited to specific groups but is broadly applicable to everyday life. The growing global recognition of meditation, including initiatives by the United Nations and recommendations from the World Health Organization, further underscores its relevance as a self-care and preventive mental health strategy. Scientific advancements, particularly in neuroimaging and psychophysiological research, provide additional support by demonstrating measurable positive changes in brain function and stress-related responses associated with regular practice. Importantly, meditation requires minimal resources, can be practiced independently, and is adaptable to various cultural and personal preferences. Even brief and low-cost interventions have shown meaningful outcomes, making meditation a feasible tool for large-scale public health promotion. However, despite promising evidence, the review identifies a need for more rigorous longitudinal and experimental studies to establish stronger causal relationships and evaluate long-term effectiveness.

In conclusion, meditation represents a simple yet powerful technique for managing stress and promoting mental well-being. Integrating meditation into daily routines, educational curricula, workplace wellness programs, and community health initiatives may contribute significantly to improving emotional balance and overall quality of life in modern society.

This review demonstrates that meditation is a useful and realistic way for regular people to manage their stress. Regular meditation has been shown in numerous studies to reduce stress, enhance emotional equilibrium, sharpen focus, and promote mental health. People of all ages and lifestyles can utilize it because it is straightforward, inexpensive, and simple to practice. Although the results clearly demonstrate the benefits of meditation, more thorough and extended research is still required. All things considered, meditation is a helpful self-care technique for managing stress and ought to be included into everyday routines to support people in leading more balanced, peaceful, and healthy lives.

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