



Intro to Mindfulness & Meditation

Research has shown that mindfulness/meditation has a range of health benefits.

Relevant to patients with neurologic conditions: Meditation can increase heart rate variability, release GABA (a neuro-transmitter) and/or dopamine, and possibly decrease inflammation.

Here are some suggestions for how to explore meditation and learn what it can do for you.

Basic Intro to Meditation:

- 1) Smart Phone App: Healthy Minds Program App for guided meditations. (Both iPhone and Droid)
- 2) Coherent Breathing: Using a Timed Bell to Regulate Inhale and Exhale Length:
 - a. Type “Coherent Breathing 2 Bells” on YouTube search bar
 - b. Numerous videos will come up – choose any one of them, a resonant bell will sound.
 - c. Time your inhale and exhale to align with the bells. The bell rings every 5 seconds.
 - d. For the next 5-10 min: Focus on cultivating a slow and deep breath cycle. Try to expand base of lungs, and also feel air filling the top of the lungs. If your mind wanders, bring it back to focusing on timing your inhale and exhale and creating a smooth breath cycle.

Additional “Breath Control” Exercises: To calm the body and mind.

Controlled Breathing exercises naturally stimulate relaxation in the body. Once you learn basic techniques, you can do them whenever you feel over-stimulated, or also to help induce sleep.

- 1) iBreathe app

In this app, you can set the timer for the bell to ring at which ever interval you choose. To help relaxation, try to make the exhale 2-4 seconds longer than the inhale. You can also count the length of inhale/exhale silently as a way to calm your mind.

- 2) Box Breathing is a technique where you “make a box” with your breath, by silently counting up to 4 on each phase of the breath cycle.

“Holding” refers to the process of actively pausing between the inhale and exhale.

If you feel short of breath or anxious while “holding” the breath, either skip this step or hold for a very short time until you start to feel more comfortable with this process.

