



# TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION **EXPLAINED**



by Dr Gemma Beckley

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*Please note that the Meditation Trust has no connection with the Maharishi Foundation.*

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# Dr Gemma Beckley



Dr Beckley teaches transcendental meditation with the Meditation Trust, principally in London, and also practises part time as a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS. She began transcendental meditation at the age of 6, and after many years began intensive practice and advanced courses with the Meditation Trust in 2001, culminating in several months of specific residential teacher training in the methods laid down by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Within her years of training as a Clinical Psychologist Dr Beckley worked in a range of settings including psychiatric hospitals, community mental health teams, secure forensic services, learning disability services and specialist eating disorder services. Her approach to psychological therapies is integrative, being informed by positive psychology, solution focused therapy and 'third wave' CBT which incorporates mindfulness meditation practices. Dr Beckley's Psychology undergraduate research explored the effects of TM on occupational stress. Her professional doctorate thesis in Clinical Psychology explored the effects of TM on anxiety, depression and well being.

Since becoming a teacher of transcendental meditation privately to the general public, Dr Beckley not only teaches those with high levels of stress and a wide range of resulting mental and physical health problems, but also many hundreds of high achieving healthy and successful individuals who want to improve the quality of their lives in numerous ways and achieve their full potential.

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# What is Transcendental Meditation?

**Transcendental Meditation (TM) is the simplest, most natural and effortless technique of meditation – so simple that the adult technique can be learned from the age of 10.**

But it is also the most advanced and fundamentally different approach because the simplicity is based on a profound and complete understanding of not just the mind and its behaviour but also the body, and how the two interact during deep meditation, something not understood in virtually any other approach. Therefore a maximum of 20 minutes, twice a day, sitting in a comfortable chair are all that is required.

This is why when Dr. Deepak Chopra, world-renowned speaker and author of more than 50 books on meditation and its associated practices, learned TM in 1980 he called it 'Real' meditation because, he said, it represented a major breakthrough in interpretation of this very ancient knowledge.

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*"I discovered TM in 1980. My friend Vinod and I called it 'real meditation' because we felt that an undeniable breakthrough had been made in a tradition that cashes in more on legends than results... I remember being so taken with bewildered happiness that I said 'it's true!'... just that."* **Dr Deepak Chopra**  
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## **A simple, effortless Yoga for the mind**

This knowledge of transcendence (traditionally known as *yoga*), which means the mind settling effortlessly into silence, is the most powerful key to unlock your inner potential for self-healing and personal growth because it is simple and natural and therefore works for everyone. Frequently, those who have learned, or even taught, other forms of meditation, are astonished when they learn Transcendental Meditation that the simplicity and effectiveness of their new knowledge produces results that may have eluded them for years.

TM is not concentration or visualisation, nor is it control or even mindfulness. Using a mantra (or sound) upon which to gently and innocently rest our attention, we simply allow the mind the freedom to follow its natural tendency towards happiness, and it will settle spontaneously into silence. This unique approach, passed on during personal instruction by a teacher trained as directed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, comes from the ancient Vedic tradition of India.

The resulting peace (sometimes, and increasingly, blissful) allows the body also to gain very deep rest (much deeper than sleep), in which it can dissolve even its deepest stresses accumulated as a result of life's worst traumas. As we emerge refreshed and revitalised from the silence of meditation, this has the potential to produce sometimes dramatic improvements in any area of our life, as indicated by a vast and ever increasing body of research over the last 45 years. However, for most people, the biggest results come gradually and comfortably over time.

## **Vedic Meditation**

Transcendental Meditation is Vedic meditation, which derives from the Vedic texts of India, first written down around 5000 years ago. Because the Vedas have inspired the multitude of religious approaches collectively known as Hinduism, they are generally thought to be Hindu texts. But their ancestry in fact stretches back millennia in the history of humanity, before the modern religious era, as an oral, scientific tradition, best known for giving us *Yoga* (the art of living) and

*Ayurveda* (the science of life).

The word *Veda* is normally translated as science, knowledge, or truth, and comprises the knowledge required by humanity to 'live life in perfection'. This was cognised by yogis during the practice of Vedic meditation, brought to the surface of their minds and transmitted in chant form from generation to generation.

The most notable lineage of teachers who passed on Vedic meditation is the Shankaracharya tradition, including the great Veda Vyasa and Adi Shankara after whom it is named. Like all traditions it has had periods when the knowledge became distorted and was eventually restored to clarity by a great teacher.

The most recent of these restorations was in the early 20th Century when Swami Brahmananda Saraswati passed his clear perceptions of the reality of Vedic meditation to his disciple Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, to be brought out not just to India but to the whole world. Wishing to distinguish this restoration from the misunderstandings prevalent for more than a thousand years, Maharishi did not call his teaching of Vedic meditation by that name, but instead called it *Transcendental Meditation*. This new name is a description of how the process of Vedic meditation (during which the mind settles beyond activity, or 'transcends') differs significantly from other practices.

# How to do Transcendental Meditation

The technique of Transcendental Meditation (TM) is not one of *doing*, it's more about *not doing*. Because the mind is always searching for happiness, and the ultimate happiness is found when the mind is silent, no effort is needed to make it settle (no matter how busy your mind!). Thinking a mantra innocently allows the mind the freedom to seek its own natural happiness. Any control or focussing by the meditator only gets in the way. Because of this lack of effort, it can be practised anywhere (even on busy public transport) by anyone of any background, education, beliefs (religious or otherwise).

You are not asked to give anything up or change your lifestyle in any way. You simply sit comfortably (most people prefer a chair) and close your eyes for up to 20 minutes, twice a day (the best investment you'll ever make!).

**Transcendental Meditation is very simple but as a result very subtle and delicate. It therefore cannot be learned from a book, DVD or online.**

Its effectiveness depends on the skilled instruction and guidance (usually free for life) of a professionally qualified instructor who has meditated themselves for many years and undertaken extensive training, as directed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Trying to take a shortcut to understanding will almost certainly end in disappointment. Because the simplicity of *doing nothing* is contrary to everything else we *do* in our lives, it is very easily misunderstood.



# How is Transcendental Meditation Different?

A common mistake made by the casual observer is to think that all meditation is basically the same. It is now clearly shown by scientific research that the various techniques of meditation differ not only in the actual mental process being used, but also in the very different effects that have been measured in the brain and their effect on our lives. So how is transcendental meditation different?

In essence, there is one fundamental difference between TM and other approaches: Most meditation aims to control or train the mind by a way of thinking. Transcendence, on the other hand, involves no concentration, control, or training. (It is counter-productive to try to force the mind to go somewhere it already wants to go naturally!)

TM allows the mind to go beyond surface level thinking towards silence (the source of thought) and concentration, focus and control as well as freedom and creativity are the spontaneous results.

**A recent review of research has suggested three main categories of meditation:**

**I. Focused Attention or concentration techniques** (e.g. Zen, Qi gong, Vipassana) require effort to sustain controlled attention on an object, and therefore are characterised by high frequency activity in the front and core of the brain.

**2. Open Monitoring includes mindfulness-based techniques**, in which all experiences are allowed to pass through awareness without manipulation or control, but the mind is generally being trained to return to the present moment by using an object, breath, or body as an anchor. These are characterised by theta activity primarily in the front of the brain.

**3. Automatic Self-Transcending (AST)** involves neither concentration nor training the mind. *Automatic* means innocence is the key here. Evaluation, control or manipulation will leave you caught up in thinking and prevent transcending. AST includes TM, and the occasional expert in other techniques. It describes any technique which transcends (goes beyond) the steps of the meditation practice itself. Alpha brain waves (characteristic of reduced mental activity and relaxation) permeate the whole brain, which receives more oxygen. Increased blood flow to the front (which is coordinating activity) while the core of the brain is more quiet, indicates alertness in the midst of deep rest, the state of transcendental or pure consciousness (pure silence!).

### **So is Transcendental Meditation the best?**

Each meditation technique has its own benefits. The first two categories use the conscious, surface level of the mind, training the mind to produce specific outcomes. TM, however, is the most effective technique for transcending, which means 'going beyond' this relatively surface level of thought to experience its source. From here we spontaneously return to activity with the dynamic power of nature's silent, restful alertness which then supports all our thought, speech and action (experienced briefly as the 'zone' in sport) and thereby produce a potentially much greater range of mental, physical and spiritual benefits.

Meta-analyses (statistical analysis of multiple research studies) have found that TM is more effective than other meditation or relaxation techniques in producing a range of results. Examples include:

- Reducing anxiety (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 1989)
- Increasing self actualisation (*Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 1991)
- Decreasing blood pressure (e.g. *Current Hypertension Reports*, 2007)
- Reducing addiction (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 1994)

### **How does TM differ from mindfulness?**

The purpose of mindfulness, deriving from Buddhist traditions, is gently training the mind to be in the present moment. Whilst superficially appearing similar, TM and mindfulness are actually quite different. Rather than returning the attention to the breath, body or other objects, it is the use of a specific mantra, or sound, in TM which liberates rather than trains the mind, allowing it to settle effortlessly into a silence more profound than the present moment.

Increased mindfulness is just one of the many spontaneous effects of TM, as indicated by research: A 3-month randomised controlled trial found that those practising TM reported significantly greater increases in mindfulness than waitlist participants (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2009).

The full practice of meditation in the Yoga tradition was prevalent in India before and during the life of the Buddha. In this practice, the meditation itself is preceded and nourished by mindfulness in the form of *Asana* (yoga postures) and *Pranayama* (breathing techniques) when, most importantly, attention on first body and then breath create a state of *Pratyahara*, movement of attention inwards, away from the world's distractions.

The practice of meditation that follows is then, if properly applied, a simple, effortless and automatic continuation of the flow of attention towards peaceful, blissful silence, like a river flowing spontaneously towards the ocean. This understanding of effortless meditation was revived in India in the 1950s by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as *transcendental meditation*.

# Origins of Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation is not new, but is a part of the Vedic tradition of India, stretching back several thousand years. It is the heart of the *Yoga* system, and an important part of *Ayurveda* (the 'Science of Life'), the world's most ancient system of natural healthcare and personal development.

It may not always have had the same name, but the same basic technique has appeared many times in the past. At times when it disappeared from popular awareness, it was always preserved by the monks of the Shankaracharya tradition as Raja Yoga, the 'royal path to unity', which described the vast mental resources that lie virtually untapped below the surface of our conscious mind.

Through misunderstanding of the origins of Transcendental Meditation original teachings however, the process prescribed to release this potential and thereby solve life's problems, *Ashtanga Yoga*, of which TM is described as the 'heart', has been interpreted as eight steps of control and correct behaviour, which would eventually lead to the ability to experience a settled mind or *samadhi*. Because of this confusion of cause and effect, it didn't work for all but a few who were prepared to give up normal activity. Meditation was for a long time relegated to the fringes of everyday life, and for active people became substituted by visualisation and other relaxation techniques.

In the 1950s, however, a major revival of interest in meditation began when Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a disciple of a renowned leader of the Shankaracharya tradition, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, travelled throughout India and around the world several times to re-establish the original understanding of meditation as

a simple, effortless flow of the mind towards happiness.

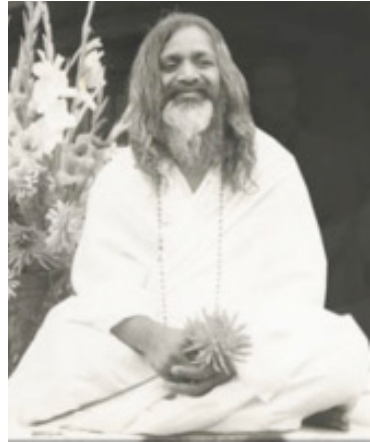
People's experience of the mind's natural tendency to be active had been leading them into efforts to control it, forgetting that it is also the nature of the mind to be still when given the opportunity.

In order to distinguish his revival of the pure knowledge from the prevailing misunderstandings, he called it *Transcendental Meditation* (TM). Since 1958, more than six million people have discovered on learning TM, that the most advanced meditation (meaning the most effective) is actually the simplest and can be practised by anybody.

So no effort is needed. In fact, the only rule given to new meditators is 'don't make an effort.' Quite a relief for most people!



*Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, highly revered throughout India as one of the greatest masters of the Shankaracharya tradition, was Maharishi's teacher and the inspiration behind the TM revival.*



*Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of Transcendental Meditation, a revolutionary in the world of yoga teaching, described himself as "an engineer, sent to repair a road".*

# Transcendental Meditation Mantras

TM is practised by silently and effortlessly thinking a *mantra* or sound, which has been passed on during personal instruction by a fully-trained teacher following careful guidelines laid down by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It is strongly recommended that you do not try to learn TM from any other source, even if they claim to be using Transcendental Meditation mantras, for reasons which will become apparent below.

## **How do Transcendental Meditation mantras work?**

The mantra does not act as a focus for the mind as in other forms of meditation, but as a 'vehicle' upon which the attention gently and innocently rests. This allows the mind to settle into increasingly subtle levels of thinking, and finally the mantra itself is transcended and we settle into silence.

**There are two qualities of the Transcendental Meditation mantra which are important for this process to occur:**

**It is a meaningless sound.** Using a word with meaning would keep the mind on the surface, thinking about the word, and not allow it to transcend (go beyond) that level.

**Its vibration has a resonance** with its source in the primordial hum (*Om*) close to the silent, blissful level of the mind which gives it a tendency to fade in that direction. This attracts and charms the mind, which itself is always searching for

greater happiness, so the mind settles with the mantra towards silence.

### **Where do Transcendental Meditation mantras come from?**

The mantras used in Transcendental Meditation come from the ancient Vedic tradition of India. They are *Sanskrit* sounds, the language which is the closest possible human imitation of the natural vibrations produced by the dynamism of the unified field – the field identified by objective modern science as the silent source of all creation, and by yogis in their meditation as the Self – the field of Pure Consciousness. Some mantras have healing power for specific parts of the body, but the Transcendental Meditation mantras are for transcending, which has an enormous healing effect for the whole body and mind and much more.

### **How do you choose the Transcendental Meditation mantra?**

There are thousands of mantras, from which a small number with known effects are used. We choose one that is suitable for you from a selection passed on by Maharishi according to a simple procedure that ensures it is correct.

### **Can I get my mantra from my friend, or some other source?**

It is important to receive the mantra from a fully trained Transcendental Meditation teacher because they have been given a selection of mantras which have been passed down through a long line of teachers over thousands of years. The effects are therefore well known both historically and currently to be always positive and life-enhancing.

The mantras and procedures for passing them on are received by the teacher after months of intensive training, and the student is asked not to share the mantra or the way it is taught with anyone. This is for the benefit of the one already meditating (see next question), and to preserve the purity of the teaching ensuring that every person receives full and correct instruction. This is very important.

**There are 4 vital aspects of the teaching that ensure that it will work for you:**

- Receiving a correct mantra.
- Knowing how to use it properly.
- Being able to correctly interpret the experiences that come as a result.
- Having the support and guidance of a fully trained teacher free for the rest of your life.

Any one of these aspects missing could result in incorrect practice, lack of progress, and giving up on meditation completely, so missing a priceless opportunity to significantly enhance your life.

### **I don't think I could/would want to keep my mantra a secret**

This is not an uncommon feeling for people to have before they start. However after a few TM meditations, the mantra becomes very personal to you; it's the vehicle that allows the attention to dive inwards and the mind begins to associate the mantra with the experience of settling down and enjoying inner silence. It becomes a treasured and trusted friend. Speaking the mantra aloud, chanting it or passing it on is to bring the mantra 'out', to reverse its natural direction – it's of no value. Also, the Transcendental Meditation mantras only work in context. Using or speaking the mantra without its simple yet very specific instructions and personal guidance from a teacher simply doesn't work. Because the way that TM is taught is simple and does work, once you learn you will no doubt feel, as others have, that you want friends and family to learn it in the same simple, effective and enjoyable way. We find therefore that it is actually extremely rare for anyone to abuse their mantra in this way, even if they started with the same doubt as you.

### **Why not Om?**

As explained above, not just any sound will do. Different mantras have different

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effects. The mantras used in TM are a group of 'householder' mantras designed to enable people to experience deep, restful meditation which brings integration between inner silence and outer activity – deep rest along with energy and dynamism. *Om* has a strong environmental effect which is OK if chanted in a group, but if used as a personal, internal mantra, it is suited only for those wanting to withdraw from active life.

### **Isn't it better to chant the mantra?**

Chanting the mantra will keep the body (mouth, throat etc.) active, and therefore not allow it to sink into the state of natural, deep rest that TM is famous for. Chanting also controls the mind and prevents it from settling into silence, as it naturally wants to do. And modern science has shown us that these quieter, deeper levels of life are more powerful – the nuclear level is far more powerful than the atomic level. Similarly, mantras are more powerful when they are thought rather than chanted, but the biggest power is discovered when the mantra is transcended as in the process of Transcendental Meditation.

### **How can we be sure the mantras work?**

You cannot get a wrong mantra if taught by a qualified TM teacher, and it will always work because it is a natural process. Extremely rarely someone feels the mantra is not right, but this is always a sign of incorrect use – and easily corrected by their teacher. These particular Transcendental Meditation mantras have been passed on in this specific way to millions of people all around the world since Maharishi's revival of this ancient knowledge in 1958. The success of the technique has been verified by the benefits indicated by testimonials and a vast body of scientific research in universities around the world.

# Frequently Asked Questions about Transcendental Meditation

## **Can anyone learn?**

Yes, TM is so simple, natural and effortless to practise that even children from the age of 6 can learn! And you are never too old! Anyone who can think can meditate!

## **My mind is always too busy/I can't sit still – I could never meditate!**

Many people say this before learning, but the real purpose of meditation is not to still the mind or the body (although this will happen spontaneously as a result of the practice). There is no effort made to concentrate or control the mind because just as much as it is the nature of the mind to be active, it is also the nature of the mind to be still, given the opportunity. Any organism in nature that can be active must, by definition, be able to be less active, and ultimately totally still. This includes the mind. You'll have no problem once you understand how to meditate properly. Even children with diagnoses of ADHD can practise effortlessly!

## **How long does it take each day? I don't think I'd have the time!**

Just 20 minutes of TM, twice a day, is the **maximum** time recommended to give you the benefits you would get from hours of most other techniques. Even if you don't have time for 40 minutes a day you will still get enormous benefit. And

because it is very enjoyable and easy to do, you will find keeping it up much easier than anything else you've tried. It also helps that you can practise anywhere, anytime! Frequently, very busy people remark after practising TM for a short while, that they have sacrificed 40 minutes a day and seem to have gained a couple of hours, because when we come out of meditation we tend to be more alert and creative and get more done in less time.

**Will I have to change my life – give up things like alcohol, smoking or sex, or sit on the floor?**

No. You are not asked to give up anything. It's true that some organisations teaching meditation do ask you to give up these things because they are asking you to control your mind. But with TM, good habits are a spontaneous and natural result of meditation, not a requirement for learning! And sex is certainly not a barrier to meditation. Any addiction or obsession will tend to fade as a result of TM, whilst enjoyment of life will increase. Good posture is another result of meditation. During your course you will sit on a chair, unless you prefer not to. And we strongly advise against making any sudden changes to how you sit.

**From your list of benefits of TM, it seems you're saying that it is a panacea for all the world's ills. Isn't that a bit of an exaggeration?**

Any doctor or healer will admit that it's the power of Nature that heals. And nature's power is unlimited in its potential. The effectiveness of any approach is in its ability to allow you to connect with the deeper, more powerful levels of Nature. And TM is the purest form of *Yoga*, which means integration of life – the most natural and effective way to connect with the power deep within you.

**What if it doesn't work for me?**

The process that TM stimulates is natural and **will always work for everyone.**

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Some will notice it working straight away, sometimes spectacularly. Others of us have to wait longer. It's still working, but taking longer to bring results to our conscious awareness. Anytime someone feels it's not working, they can rely on help from their teacher – we provide free support and guidance for life.

### **How long will it take to see any benefits?**

As above, some will notice the benefits straight away, with others it will take longer. But this is just a difference in perception – it will actually work right from your first meditation.

### **Will TM practice change my personality?**

By dissolving the stress which distorts our personality, TM reduces our negative habits of thought, speech or action, leaving room for the real, wonderful you to shine through! Whilst being calmer inside, you will tend to find yourself more self-assertive, self-confident and alert, many people have. No change of personality – just more in balance.

### **Don't we need stress to function efficiently?**

We suggest that this is not a useful use of the word *stress*. Most of us enjoy some challenge in our lives which increases motivation and helps us achieve great things. But we all have a point (which varies from person to person) where that challenge can become pressure, and counter-productive. When you're tired, feeling stressed and under pressure, you're more likely to make mistakes.

Creativity comes from being clear-minded, calm and rested. The yogis of India have for thousands of years described the silence of meditation as a state of 'restful alertness', wide awake but still. When this quality is brought to the surface level of the mind after meditation, it replaces the nervous tension that so many had been relying on previously for stimulation. This has been an absolute revelation

for thousands of meditators, who have found themselves more creative, clear headed, successful and stress-free as a result.

### **Will it conflict with my religious beliefs?**

It will not. People of all religions have learned TM. In fact, many TM teachers are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist etc. Priests, Monks, Nuns and even a few Bishops have learned transcendental meditation and the most common comment is that it has enriched their faith. TM is not a religion but Yoga (spiritual knowledge, ie. personal and subjective). There is a distinct difference, and Yoga pre-dates religion by thousands of years. For a full understanding of this question, and especially if you have friends or family members who think TM is a threat to their beliefs, we have copies of a wonderful book written by a Catholic Priest, the late Fr. Adrian Smith, which gives a Christian understanding of TM. It's called *A Key to the Kingdom of Heaven* (£1). He's also written a pamphlet entitled *Questions Christians ask about transcendental meditation* (30p). Both are available if you contact The Meditation Trust via our website [www.meditationtrust.com](http://www.meditationtrust.com)

### **I have suffered from mental illness/epilepsy/brain injury, is it safe for me to meditate?**

Yes, it is safe. TM cannot do you any harm since it is a natural process which gives deep rest to both mind and body, which will gradually reduce symptoms, giving greater mental stability (read the chapter, Benefits of TM). It will certainly not prevent you from experiencing many of the wide range of other benefits indicated in the research. We may make some adjustments to the teaching to take mental illness into account, so you are requested to make this clear to your teacher on the teacher's information form before instruction. Every TM student is given as much support and guidance as they require according to any needs that they may have.

# Transcendental Meditation Benefits – Relief of Stress

Stress negatively affects everything we do when we are caught up, mentally, physically and emotionally, in constant activity. **It is now widely recognised that stress aggravates every disease and disorder.** Therefore a technique which provides deep physiological rest, the complete antidote to the stress response, will affect every aspect of life in a positive way.

**Because TM is a natural, spontaneous process, the benefits of transcendental meditation are automatic, starting start right from the very first day, with most people noticing something tangible before the end of the course.**

Transcendental Meditation benefits cover every aspect of life. Millions of people practicing TM around the world testify to its wide-ranging benefits, supported by more than 650 scientific research studies spanning more than 40 years. A good indicator of the overall effect of TM on health was provided by a study of data from a major US health insurer which compared the use of healthcare over five years by 2000 of their subscribers practising TM with a similar matched group of non-meditators (*Psychosomatic Medicine*, 1987). The findings attracted the following comment from Dr James Le Fanu in the Sunday Telegraph, “*The overall benefits of transcendental meditation are so staggering as to be almost unbelievable – in one 5 year study, half the number of inpatient admissions to hospital (87% fewer for heart disease and nervous system disorders) ... These findings are remarkable.*”

Both hospital admissions and outpatient visits were 50% lower in meditators. In the over 40 age group, the reduction was more than 70%. Hospital admissions for medical and surgical conditions were 60-70% lower in the TM group, with reductions in all 17 categories studied, e.g. admissions were 87% less for heart and blood vessel disorders and neurological problems, 55% less for tumours, and 73% less for respiratory disorders. Results were much higher in a later 11 year study when TM practice was combined with an Ayurvedic healthcare programme, with hospital admissions more than 90% less than controls in most categories of illness.

### **What is stress?**

Contrary to popular misunderstanding, it is not events themselves, but our interpretation of challenging events (e.g. work pressure, divorce, exams, bereavement, moving house) and the effect that this has on our bodies – known as the fight or flight response – which creates stress.

Stress is not the event, but the residual physiological imbalance, or impression left in the nervous system (known for millennia in the yoga tradition as *samskara* – or 'scars'!) which then inhibits our quality of performance in every aspect of life.

The 'fight or flight' or 'stress' response is our evolutionary survival mechanism, a physiological reaction that occurs in immediate response to a perceived threat, preparing our bodies to react quickly. Stress hormones including cortisol and adrenaline are secreted, temporarily changing the functioning of the whole body. Stored glucose and fats are released for energy, heart rate increases, blood pressure rises, muscles tense, and oxygen consumption increases, whilst other processes not needed at that time are suppressed, such as digestion, cellular repair and sexual functioning. Effects in the brain cause heightened emotional responses and reduced decision making processes.

## **How does stress affect us long-term?**

Although we rarely experience life-threatening situations these days, we still experience many challenges, often psychological, to which the body responds, e.g. in a traffic jam, at our office desk or watching a horror film. But we do not follow through with action, nor do we allow ourselves adequate time to rest and recover, so the physiology will stay imbalanced. Over time, repeated arousal takes its toll, and a state of continual physiological and psychological arousal and tension results.

Accumulation of stress also disturbs our sleep and distorts our perception, making us more likely to respond inappropriately to future stimulus, which will further aggravate the problem. This is a vicious cycle which is often not acknowledged until our mental or physical health is noticeably affected.

It is now widely recognised that stress has a role to play in all health problems, affecting the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, immune, and central nervous systems. Research suggests, for example, that prolonged stress contributes to high blood pressure, promotes the formation of artery-clogging deposits precipitating heart failure, peptic ulcers from the imbalance of acids in the stomach, and skin disorders such as eczema from the abnormal chemical secretions in the skin. Other organs such as the lungs, bladder and reproductive system are also susceptible.

It is not only physical health that is affected – as stress accumulates it increases the ‘chatter’ of the mind, thinking becomes less clear, less efficient, less creative, and research indicates brain changes that may contribute to anxiety, depression, and addiction. The distortion of perception resulting from accumulated stress in the body also means that we are more likely to perceive events or challenges in a more threatening way, which in turn increases activation of the flight or flight response and continues the cycle.



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*TM is one of the best things I have ever done...I was asked how I can be so calm when my life as described in my book was so stressful. Answer – TM and spirituality. Meditation really grounds you and TM is really the best there is. As a senior healthcare professional in an NHS hospital I had many years of sleepless nights and long days when the work seemed to be never ending. Meditation really helped me to stay on course. My sleeping improved and even my days seemed lighter..... Acklima Akbar, Author of **And then there was Swine Flu***  
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### **Dissolving stress through TM (the rest response!)**

Modern 'stress management' attempts to control our external circumstances, and particularly in business this can be very useful. Poor work practices need to be improved, but this should not be confused with stress. And whilst medication is useful in the short term management of symptoms, it is still not addressing the cause, which is actually our insufficient degree of rest which deprives the body of the opportunity to recover and return to balance.

It is a well-known principle in nature that where a problem exists, its antidote is not far away. And this is certainly true with the 'fight or flight' response. When we first learn TM the mind may be exposed to just a few seconds of deep silence which we may not even notice. But this is enough to give the body very deep rest, much deeper than in sleep. This has been called by scientists a 'restructuring state' because it produces physiological reactions exactly opposite to those of the 'fight or flight' response.

The body's natural healing mechanisms begin to function fully. Deep-rooted stresses and tensions are spontaneously dissolved, which clears our perceptions, reversing the cycle of stress accumulation and bringing relief to a wide range of human problems, both individual and sociological.

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"I would describe (TM) as being an oasis in the midst of a desert, a foothold in the vagaries of life...I know very, very, well how life can throw a curved ball, but having the benefit of an oasis within I have found the realities of life can be not an insurmountable trial but a challenge" **Peter Capon**  
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### **Don't we need stress to function efficiently?**

This is an understandable and commonly asked question. We suggest that this is not a useful use of the word stress. Most of us enjoy some challenge in our lives which increases motivation and helps us achieve great things. But we all have a point (which varies from person to person) where that challenge can become pressure, and counter-productive. When you're tired, feeling stressed and under pressure, you're more likely to make mistakes.

Creativity comes from being clear-minded, calm and rested. The yogis of India have for thousands of years described the silence of meditation as a state of 'restful alertness', wide awake but still. When this quality is brought to the surface level of the mind after meditation, it replaces the nervous tension that so many had been relying on previously for stimulation. This has been an absolute revelation for thousands of meditators, who have found themselves more creative, clear headed, successful and stress-free as a result.

### **Research**

A number of studies have found that TM is more effective in reducing stress than ordinary rest . A meta-analysis of 32 studies showed that physiological and biochemical indicators of stress, such as respiration rate, plasma lactate level, and basal skin resistance decreased more than twice as much during TM as during ordinary sitting rest. (*American Psychologist*, 1987).

Several results suggest that the most settled periods of TM practice (known

as transcendental consciousness), involve a unique physiological state, clearly distinguishable from sleep, drowsiness, or ordinary relaxation. These include: deep rest, increased orderliness and integration of brain functioning, and increased blood flow to the brain (e.g. *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 2000). Also, features appear that are directly opposite to the physiological and biochemical effects of stress, such as decreased plasma cortisol, deep muscle relaxation, reduced physiological excitation with increased wakefulness (e.g. *American Psychologist*, 1987). High EEG coherence during TM has been found to correlate with measures of mental development, emotional stability, self-development, self-awareness, and with lower anxiety and neuroticism (*International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 2001).

# Transcendental Meditation Benefits – Enhancement of life

## **In Business**

All of the benefits that we see occurring within and between individuals from the practice of TM cannot help but create benefits within the workplace. People of all professions rediscover their natural ability to remain calm under pressure, free from tension and fatigue and at the peak of their mental clarity and performance, which has encouraged companies such as Sony, General Motors, IBM and Toyota to make transcendental meditation available to their staff.

Research specifically in workplace settings has indicated that TM practice within organisations can significantly improve relationships with supervisors and co-workers, increase job satisfaction, performance and productivity, reduce job related worry and tension, and improve ability to make decisions. These benefits have been found in employees at every level of the organisation (e.g. *Academy of Management Journal*, 1974)

Employees practicing TM have also shown significantly greater improvements than matched control subjects on general health and reductions in physiological arousal, anxiety, job tension, insomnia, fatigue, and consumption of cigarettes and alcohol (*Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 1993).

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*"Having a stressful job I realised I had to do something...for me TM has been exceedingly useful. I can work much more effectively when I practise regularly...and I find I have more time for family and leisure"*  
Dr Thomas Setterfield, GP  
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## **Creativity**

Stress negatively affects our creativity. Stress hormones released during the fight or flight response disrupt the rational part of our brains and can cause negative thinking which can block our creativity. Our vision also becomes tunnelled (to be able to focus on a crisis), which affects our ability to see multiple options. Research also indicates that areas of the brain associated with executive decision making are affected, potentially leaving us in habitual behavioural loops and being caught up in detail rather than exploring other options.

Since TM dissolves accumulated stress from the nervous system, it is no surprise that research has found the practice to significantly improve creativity, e.g. through measures of originality and flexibility and on verbal fluency (*Journal of Creative Behaviour*, 1979). Studies have shown that when we meditate our brainwave functioning begins to mirror that of moments of peak performance and gradually this becomes our naturally functioning state. This helps us achieve enhanced creative thinking at all times.

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*"I would not ever be without my TM...Since I've meditated I've written books and got published. I could never reach my creativity before TM. Now, I meditate then write and it just flows."* Alexandra Massey  
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## **In Education**

Our brains are in a constant state of development. We need a healthy brain to think and act successfully. However prolonged stress not only affects our health

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and drains our energy, but it can actually kill brain cells and shrink the brain's main memory structures, affecting attention, memory, organisation and integration.

The deep rest of mind and body during TM dissolves the build up of stress and tiredness, leaving you feeling more refreshed and settled and with a clearer mind. Also, unique to this technique, widespread brainwave coherence has been shown to be created, making the brain healthier and able to function together as a whole. When frontal brain areas are more coherent, the executive functions with which they are associated (e.g. decision making, planning, short-term memory, moral reasoning) are enhanced. We start to be able to achieve more optimal functioning and reach our full potential.

Research has indicated that the practice of TM can significantly increase 'field intelligence' (associated with greater organisation of mind and clarity of thought, improved memory, increased creative expression, and increased ability to assimilate and structure experience) (*Perceptual Motor Skills*, 1986), improve short-term memory (*Memory and Cognition*, 1982), and increase creative thinking (*Journal of Creative Behaviour*, 1979).

Research in educational settings has found TM practice to improve academic performance (*Education*, 1989) and accelerate cognitive development, improved concept learning, and improved focus and attention in children (*Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 2005). Additionally, the children practicing TM showed increased emotional regulation, and improved well-being and behaviour, decreased absenteeism, rule-breaking, and behaviour-related suspensions (*Health Quality of Life Outcomes*, 2010). Masters degree students were found to significantly improve in performance on their standard examinations after six months (*British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1985).

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"It cleared my thinking so incredibly quickly...clarity of thought. Now  
I can not imagine my life without TM." **Ken Darlington**  
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## Energy

Stress lowers our energy levels because during the fight or flight response, not only is much of the energy stored in our cells released, but we exhaust our adrenal glands through the production of the stress hormone, cortisol. These responses create energy required in the short-term, but as we wind down leave us tired and 'wired', and in the longer-term exhausted.

As soon as we begin to practice TM, the body is able to start to let go of stress and fatigue from the nervous system by gaining deep rest in meditation. At the same time, sleep starts to improve as a result. Consequently, people very quickly start to find themselves feeling lighter, more refreshed and energised throughout the day.

Research has found increased energy, decreased fatigue, and improved sleep to be just a few of the benefits of practicing TM over time (e.g. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 1993).

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*"TM has been exceedingly useful...I find that my energy levels increase substantially...I've also noticed a reduction in fatigue, better sleep.."* **Dr Thomas Setterfield, GP**  
.....

## Higher states of Consciousness

We are all very familiar with three states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and sleeping. Each state of consciousness has its corresponding unique state of physiology. During TM we temporarily experience a fourth state of consciousness called 'transcendental consciousness' – characterised by distinct physiological and mental phenomena of restful alertness – full self-awareness yet without our usual mental activity. This unique state has been observed in neural imaging patterns and EEG research by decreased activity in the thalamus (the part of the brain which sends signals to all other areas of the brain), and increased activity in the frontal and parietal cortices (both involved in attention). It is this state which allows

the stress in the nervous system to dissolve, improves the connections between areas of the brain, and develops brain functioning, thereby producing health and well being. With regular practice this state begins to be experienced increasingly out in activity, gradually becoming permanently established.

## Relationships

A stressed body is unable to let go of past experience, causing a build-up of blocked energy in the nervous system, sometimes referred to as 'cellular memory'. This build up of further stress in the system with its attendant painful memories creates an over-reactive fight or flight response. Whenever those with whom we interact trigger this, we may become emotional, aggressive or irrational, and tend to be in the habit of accusing others of 'making us stressed'. We may also get caught up in repetitive, negative relationship patterns, all of which allow the stress to accumulate further. But when, through TM we allow the nervous system to let go of the build up of blocked negative energy known as stress, with it goes our unwanted emotional negativity. A positive cycle emerges where our emotions get triggered less frequently, resulting in less negative impressions accumulating, and we become more pleasant to be around, more engaged, more tolerant and compassionate for those around us. When we are happy and healthy we have more time and energy to give to others. Many meditators report this, both in their family and work relationships.

Research found that both workers and management in a heavy industry showed significant improvements in both personal and work relationships (*Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 1993)

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*"My wife says that the change in me has been amazing and that I am a completely different person to live with and to be around. She claims I am far more contented and happy, and a lot less argumentative. Hence her decision to want to learn TM for herself"* **Steve Martin**  
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## **Well-being, Personal growth & Quality of life**

The TM technique, in line with yoga's long tradition, is not intended primarily as a treatment of illness and disease, but rather as a means of enhancing growth of human awareness to its highest state. Modern day psychology talks of the concept of 'Self-actualisation', which refers to realising more of one's inner potential, expressed in every area of life. A statistical meta-analysis of 42 independent studies indicated that the effect of TM on increasing self-actualisation is markedly greater than that of other forms of meditation and relaxation (*Journal of social behavior and personality*, 1991)

Meditators find themselves consistently performing better at home, work, and recreation. Thought patterns that previously held them back begin to diminish and they feel freer to be themselves. Sensory experience is enhanced. Artists report increased appreciation of colour and musicians an extra delight in sound. Many others report taste and smells coming to life. Increased enjoyment of sex is common and fertility has been known to improve. People of all professions rediscover their natural ability to remain calm under pressure, free from tension and fatigue and at the peak of their mental clarity and performance.

Please note: Always take medical advice. TM is complementary to all healthcare approaches, often producing wonderful benefits naturally. However it is not a replacement for your prescribed treatment. Always take medical advice and never decrease any medication unless advised by your doctor to do so.

# Transcendental Meditation Benefits on Health

## **Ageing**

Many of us have observed how we, or others, appear to look older following a period of particular challenge in our lives, and now research is now indicating that stress is in fact a contributor to premature biological ageing. Although the exact mechanisms by which this occurs are not yet clear, what we do know is that the release of stress chemicals during the fight or flight response creates biological changes.

Recent research found that work-related exhaustion can have a harmful effect on critical DNA in the cells, shortening the length of sections called telomeres. This wearing effect has been linked to health problems such as Parkinson's, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, and whilst known to occur over time, the study suggests that anxiety and stress may accelerate this.

Research has also found that in addition to speeding up heart rate and increasing blood pressure, Prolonged and repeated production of the stress hormone adrenaline creates a constriction of blood vessels, which can lead to impairment of vision and hearing. Another study found that the mere anticipation of stress can increase signs of ageing on the cellular level.

The understanding that TM practice dissolves accumulated stress in the body explains how research indicates that the long term practice of TM can create a reversal of the biological ageing process (how old a person is physiologically). One study found that a group who had been practicing TM for more than five

years were physiologically 12 years younger, and others practicing less than five years were physiologically five years younger than their chronological age. This was measured by reduction of blood pressure, and better near-point vision and auditory discrimination (effects of diet and exercise controlled for). (*International Journal of Neuroscience*, 1982).

## **Asthma and Breathing**

Our breath is affected by stress. The 'fight or flight' response causes us to take short sharp breaths in preparation for danger. The build up of stress and the chronic activation of this response can mean we constantly breathe like this, only ever using the top third of our lungs, as if we were permanently hyperventilating. This leads to a poor exchange of oxygen and CO<sup>2</sup> in the bloodstream, depriving our bodies of both vital gases.

The physiological effect of a lack of CO<sup>2</sup> can make us feel 'spaced out' and can lead to panic attacks, insomnia, dizziness and extreme fatigue, while lack of oxygen can rob our organs and muscles of a proper blood flow. Hyperventilating also increases the heart rate, leading to palpitations and contributes to feelings of anxiety and being out of control.

The stress response can also create strong physiological reactions that lead to airway constriction and changes in the immune system, which can worsen asthma symptoms. Recent research has found that certain areas of the brain cause worsening asthma symptoms when a person is under stress.

The improvements in our breathing, but also in asthma symptoms, and other respiratory problems as a result of practicing TM can be therefore understood as an effect of dissolving stress and reduced 'stress reactivity'. A study of data from a major US health insurer showed that both hospital admission and outpatient consultation rates were over 50% lower for subjects practising TM than norms or controls. Admissions were 73% less for respiratory disorders. (*Psychosomatic Medicine*, 1987).

A few studies have indicated that regular practice of TM can lead to improvements in Patients with Bronchial Asthma, including reduced severity of symptoms, reduced airway resistance and less need for medication. One study found these improvements in the symptoms of 21 patients over six months, concluding that TM is a useful adjunct to treatment (*Respiration*, 1975). Other research has indicated fewer upper respiratory tract infections, improvements in chronic bronchitis, and more efficient breathing and respiratory control (*Journal of Applied Physiology*, 1984).

### **Blood Pressure**

Numerous research studies and reviews have concluded that 'stress' is a major independent risk factor for hypertension as well as coronary artery disease and cardiovascular mortality. The 'fight/flight' or stress response which is triggered by our reaction to life's challenges increases the heart rate. In cases of persistent hyperactivation, this can lead to chronically elevated blood pressure levels. Since stress is such a major factor with blood pressure problems, it is no surprise that TM, which reverses the stress response, can have a very significant impact, occasionally dramatic, on the problem.

Although research generally focuses on high blood pressure, which TM naturally reduces, this does not mean that in cases of low blood pressure it will also reduce. TM has its effect because it allows the body to gain very deep rest which activates the body's natural healing mechanisms, which only take effect when there is a problem to be solved. So if blood pressure is low it will tend to rise, if it is already at the correct level there will be no change. The experiences of thousands of meditators has shown this to be the case. Many studies have found that TM decreases blood pressure in hypertensive patients. A systematic review and meta-analysis of 107 published studies on stress reduction and high blood pressure found that TM practice significantly reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure, while other methods of meditation and relaxation, biofeedback, stress management or the usual health advice programmes did not produce significant

effects. Effects were comparable to those commonly found with anti-hypertensive medication, but without adverse side-effects, and medication use was reduced (*Current Hypertension Reports*, 2007) A second meta-analysis confirmed that TM leads to clinically important reductions in blood pressure. The authors conclude that sustained blood pressure changes like those produced by TM would be associated with substantially decreased risk of heart attack and stroke, the leading cause of world mortality (*American Journal of Hypertension*, 2008).

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*"TM has also helped me enormously with my blood pressure which began to rise this summer. I was told I needed medication for 'life'. Hearing the word 'life' made my blood pressure rise even further and with the advice from my TM teacher and a blood pressure monitor I have managed to bring my blood pressure down and I am no longer being monitored by my doctor. I am thrilled about this and I know I shall always practice TM."* **Shirley Bedford**  
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## **Cancer**

People who have cancer often find the physical, emotional, and social effects to be extremely challenging. Those who attempt to manage their resulting stress with risky behaviours such as smoking or drinking alcohol or who become more sedentary may have a poorer quality of life after cancer treatment. And some data suggests that patients who develop a sense of helplessness or hopelessness when stress becomes overwhelming may have a higher instance of negative outcomes.

The practice of TM, with its significant effect in reducing an individual's physiological stress levels indicated by scientific research, has produced a good amount of anecdotal evidence from sufferers pointing to its ability to improve, sometimes dramatically, the patient's coping ability, and therefore their experience of the process:

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"Since the transcendental meditation (TM) course two months ago, my life has been definitely challenged (so soon!) Among other things, I am shortly to undergo (minor) surgery for breast cancer. I just don't know how I would have coped with this without the amazing strength and confidence that I seem to obtain from my meditation practice. I have come to the edge of fear and been comforted beyond understanding. I am constantly drawn into a deep sense of peace and can only feel that I was meant to meet you and receive this teaching to prepare me for this experience which I guess is another step on the spiritual path." **Ann Wilson**  
.....

And research has supported that TM has a positive impact on quality of life for breast cancer patients (*Integrative Cancer Therapies*)

But improving a patient's experience and coping power in the cancer recovery process is not the only potential benefit of TM's powerful dissolving of the body's accumulated stress. Evidence from experimental studies also suggests that stress hormones can stimulate a tumour's ability to grow and spread, whilst the practice of TM has been found to reduce stress hormones (*American Psychologist*, 1987), and therefore should have potentially greater significance for patients than simply increasing coping power.

Ayurveda ('the science of life') the world's oldest natural healthcare system in continuous use for more than 5000 years, has much to say on the potential of its natural approaches, such as the TM technique which is at its heart, for awakening nature's healing intelligence. Dr Deepak Chopra explained:

"The body has a pharmacy inside us, it makes tranquilisers, sleeping pills, antibiotics, anti-cancer drugs, you name it, the body can make them, in the right dose, at the right times, for the right target organ, all the instructions are there in the packaging. Every day our bodies turn over 500 billion cells, a few of these are mutations, so in fact all our bodies have cancer cells too, and yet most of us don't get cancer because

*the body knows how to take care of that...*"

*"We are not claiming that we can cure cancer, and yet there are exceptional patients, there are patients who have spontaneous remissions, and as scientists we should be very curious, why does it happen, why does a person have cancer one day, then suddenly a few weeks or a few months later it seems to go away? Now you might say that's extremely rare, well that's true, but...if our body's getting rid of cancer cells all the time, and you could amplify that response, perhaps you have a clue as to what is the mechanism and you should be able to replicate it. Ayurvedic medicine [including TM]...it has the technologies to amplify your own healing response, which doesn't mean that you don't take conventional medicine, you can use the two as complementary measures."* Dr Deepak Chopra, endocrinologist, former Chief of Staff at a New England Hospital, world expert on Ayurveda and author of more than 50 books. From a UK TV interview 1994.

## **Cholesterol**

A recent piece of research by the American Psychological Association indicated that cholesterol levels are affected by our reactions to stress over a period of time, with some showing large increases even in the short term, while others show very little response. It was considered likely that this reflected the way people react to challenges in everyday life as well. Those with strong responses to emotional situations in their lives showed an increase in fasting cholesterol or lipid levels three years later. It seems that a person's reaction to stressors is one mechanism through which higher lipid levels may develop, and higher cholesterol levels increase cardiovascular risk in the future.

TM practice has been found, through the experience of deep rest, to reduce stress in the physiology, and therefore the activation of the fight or flight response. Research has indicated that results include reduction of both raised serum cholesterol and blood pressure, independent of changes in diet, medication, or weight (*Journal of the Israel Medical Association*, 1978; *Journal of Human Stress*, 1979). Cholesterol and other fats harm the arteries mostly when oxidised by

highly reactive chemicals known as free radicals. Products of fat oxidation include lipid peroxides, which may play an important role in arterial disease. A study of elderly people who practised TM found lower blood levels of lipid peroxides compared to non-meditating peers, indicating reduced free radical activity and decreased risk of cardiovascular injury (*Psychosomatic Medicine*, 1998). This finding is supported by recent research showing reduced free radical activity in TM practitioners compared to both non-meditating controls and practitioners of other forms of meditation (*Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 2008).

## **Chronic Fatigue**

There is some evidence that stress may trigger Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS or ME) in people who are at risk because of genetic factors. Those who experienced childhood trauma are significantly more likely to develop CFS than those who did not. Researchers say the stress of abuse may trigger the condition by affecting the central nervous, immune and neuroendocrine systems. With constant activation of the fight or flight response, the adrenals can become 'worn-out', giving the experience of fatigue, depression, and low cortisol levels – all markers that are similarly found in CFS.

Studies have demonstrated a clear connection between stress and suppression of normal immune system functioning – many CFS sufferers seem to have been highly stressed when their illness started, through a divorce, bereavement, or even the excessive training of a highly trained athlete, which, coinciding with the start of a viral infection, seemed to trigger CFS.

Since TM practice has been found, through the experience of deep rest, to reduce stress in the physiology, and therefore the activation of the fight or flight response, it can clearly be expected to reduce the severity of CFS symptoms. Meditation Trust teachers have taught many hundreds of Chronic Fatigue sufferers, across the whole spectrum of symptom severity. Some of these have been referred by their doctors who recognise the obvious connection between CFS and stress, and who have observed the improvement in symptoms, occasionally dramatic, after



learning TM. One of these doctors has described TM as one of the most effective therapeutic approaches for CFS, although sufferers do have to be patient, regular with their practice and stay in touch with their teacher.

To our knowledge there is currently no research available specifically on TM's direct effect on CFS, however research does indicate enough relief of associated symptoms to warrant further investigation. One study examining stress, health and development in employees of a company who learned TM, found that amongst other benefits was increased energy and decreased fatigue (*Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 1993). A study of a major US health insurer's data showed that both hospital admission and outpatient consultation rates were more than 50% lower for TM meditators than norms or controls (over 70% in the over-40s). The TM group showed relatively little rise in health care needs with advancing age, compared with controls, 60-70% lower hospital admission for medical and surgical conditions, with reductions in all 17 disease categories studied. Admissions were 30% less for infections, indicating a strengthening of the immune system through TM. (*Psychosomatic Medicine*, 1987).

## **Heart Health**

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is the UK's single biggest killer, with nearly 74,000 deaths in the UK each year, and research indicates that stress is a major risk factor, both directly, and indirectly. Chronic stress exposes the body to unhealthy, elevated levels of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, and research also links it to changes in the way blood clots, increasing the risk of heart attack. High stress levels may also exacerbate other risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure (BP), and lifestyle changes such as overeating, reduced exercise, and increased smoking.

The practice of TM produces the exact physiological opposite to the fight/flight response. Through the very deep rest created, it reverses the arousal of the 'stressed state' and research has indicated that it significantly reduces all the above symptoms as a result.

Chronic stress may cause BP to be maintained at excessive levels, causing left ventricular hypertrophy (enlargement of the left ventricle of the heart responsible for pumping blood to the body) which is a strong predictor of cardiovascular disease. A number of studies have found that TM practice reduces blood pressure in those including adolescents at risk for hypertension (*American Journal of Hypertension*, 2004), and in adults with mild or moderate hypertension for whom there was also reduced use of medication (e.g. *Hypertension*, 1995). Meta-analyses have summarised these findings (e.g. *Am Jnl. Hypertension*, 2008). Further analysis of one of these found significant decreases in Left Ventricular Mass, (eCAM, 2012), as well as decreased cardiovascular reactivity (*J. Psychosomatic Research*, 2001)

Research has also found other cardiovascular risk factors which are exacerbated by stress to reduce, including elevated cholesterol levels (*Journal of Human Stress*, 1979), insulin resistance (*Arch Intern Med.* 2006) and alcohol and smoking (e.g. *Jnl. Offender Rehabil.* 2002).

Elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol are associated with a greater prevalence of ischemic heart disease (*Jnl. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 2010). Acute cortisol levels have been shown to decrease significantly during TM practice (e.g. *Psychosomatic Med.* 1979) and regular TM practice produces a healthier cortisol profile of lower baseline levels over time (*Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 1997).

Research has also shown positive effects of TM practice on established heart disease. In patients with chronic heart failure, TM practice improved functional capacity and quality of life, and reduced depression and hospital admissions (*Ethn Dis.* 2007).

In patients with stable CHD, the TM decreased both blood pressure and insulin resistance – key components of the ‘metabolic syndrome’ associated with disorders including CHD, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. TM practice also increased stability of the cardiac autonomic nervous system (*Archives of Internal Medicine*, 2006), decreased symptoms of angina pectoris (*Am Jnl. Cardiol.* 1996), and carotid atherosclerosis (*Stroke*, 2000), and produced positive effects in patients with cardiac syndrome X (anginal chest pain, positive response to exercise stress

testing, and normal coronary angiogram) (*American Journal of Cardiology*, 2000).

TM has also been shown to significantly reduce use of medical care for cardiovascular diseases, and significantly decrease cardiovascular and all-cause morbidity and mortality (e.g. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 2005). One study supported by the NIH, indicated that TM practice is useful in prevention of CHD mortality, myocardial infarction, and stroke (*American Psychological Association*; 2011).

## **Insomnia**

Recent research suggests that we not only have on average 2 hours less sleep each night than we did a century ago, but also the stimulation that we receive in a day is the equivalent to that previously received in a month. Failure to adequately respond to this stimulation activates the fight or flight response and builds up stress in the physiology, which progressively spoils the quality of our sleep. The body is always wanting to throw off stress and return to balance, which is why we have a restless night and increased dreaming when we lie down to rest at night.

Insufficient or poor quality sleep has been shown to affect the brain areas responsible for complex decision-making, mental agility, and ability to consolidate memories, also activating genes that are associated with processes like inflammation, immune response, diabetes and risk of cancer.

During the daily practice of TM, the level of rest, as indicated by research (*American Psychologist*, 1987), is profound and significant. The body processes both the day's stresses and the longer-term, deeper rooted ones, releasing fatigue and other negative effects. As a result, there is less work for the body to do during the night, allowing sleep to return to normal. Meditation Trust teachers have consistently found new meditators reporting deeper, more restful sleep and, if necessary at first, longer as well. Sometimes this is noticed very rapidly, but more typically will be gradual in terms of both the amount of sleep and its quality. Those with chronic insomnia, even to the extent of 20 years on sleeping tablets

and less than two hours sleep per night, have discovered that if they are prepared to be patient, nature is capable of eventually breaking this destructive cycle and returning them to a normality of sleep that they had thought impossible. In all cases, improvement in sleep contributes significantly to benefits being experienced in other aspects of life. It is also noticed in longer-term meditators that, having dealt with the backlog of sleep deprivation, with quality of sleep being significantly improved whilst continuing with regular TM practice, it is not uncommon for the number of hours of sleep required each night to reduce.

The above observations and reports have been supported by a number of research studies in various populations indicating that TM decreases insomnia and improves quality of sleep compared to controls (e.g. *British Journal of Nursing*, 1995).

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*"I had been experiencing difficulty sleeping on and off for the last few years and had been taking anti-histamines to help me sleep around 8 out of 10 nights. Since a residential TM course six months ago at Oxon Hoath I have only taken medication a few times and have slept better most of the time. I'm also finding that stressful situations are easier to deal with as I don't get myself as wound up as I used to".*

**Rachel Sandhurst**  
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## **Jet Lag**

Jet Lag is caused not only by the fatigue of the journey, but also by the disruption to the 'body clock' from the change in time zones. The body is out of harmony with nature and the mind experiences exhaustion and disorientation. Many frequent flyers who practise TM during flights have reported a significant reduction in symptoms, which over some years can become almost non-existent. These results come from a gradual grounding of the mind in deep silence, beyond the influence of time, experienced first as periods of extended meditation seeming to

pass in an instant, and later as an omnipresent mental vastness which is unaffected by external circumstances.

## **Pain**

Whatever the origins of pain in our body, the coexistence of stress will amplify the pain. The ongoing experience of chronic pain in turn will create further stress in the system. A vicious cycle is created, amplified by the anticipatory anxiety and reactivity to the pain.

Research suggests that the regular practice of TM, by first allowing extraordinarily deep levels of rest, awakens the body's natural healing power by dissolving the stress. Reduced stress strengthens both body and mind, reducing both the experience of pain and the anxiety and tension caused by its anticipation. An underlying feeling of wellbeing, and even happiness, are able to be experienced, despite whatever levels of pain may still be lingering. As a result, many people have also experienced a reduced reliance on medication. Meditation Trust teachers have noticed that quite frequently, sufferers of acute pain are anxious before taking the TM course that they will not be able to endure a two hour meeting because of the pain. But after learning to meditate they have expressed astonishment at being able to sit through three meetings. (Please note that participants are not expected to sit still, but are encouraged to move around or change their position to whatever extent they may need in order to be comfortable).

Research has indicated that regular TM practice addresses the physical source of pain in the body with reduced frequency of pain symptoms in industrial workers (*Jpn Jnl. Public Health*, 1990), reduced headaches and backaches (*Anxiety, Stress and Coping: Intern Jnl.* 1993), and reduced use of medical care for pain-related conditions, including chest and abdominal pain (*Am Jnl. Manag Care*, 1997).

Research also showed that TM practice reduces trait anxiety (*Jnl. Clin. Psychol*, 1989), produces lower resting baseline levels of sympathetic arousal outside the practice as well as improving stress reactivity (*Am Psychol*, 1987).

Another result found that whilst long-term TM meditators sensory experience of pain is just as intense as controls, they are less distressed by it (*NeuroReport*, 2006).

## **Weight**

Scientists have claimed that whilst the challenges we now face in a day are equivalent to those we faced in a month a century ago, we are also now sleeping on average two hours less per night than at that time. Research also suggests that the resulting chronic stress now prevalent might contribute to obesity, both directly (causing people to eat more) or indirectly (decreasing exercise and sleep). Studies have shown that inadequate sleep, either in quantity or quality, contributes to obesity because it affects both particular areas of the brain and 'hunger hormones' which cause us to favour unhealthy foods and increase appetite.

Of course, there are also a large number of illnesses, and/or their accompanying medications, which are known to cause 'unintentional' weight gain (without an increase of food or liquid intake). Stress is now widely acknowledged as a major contributory factor, if not the cause, of all illness.

Research suggests that the regular practice of TM, by first allowing extraordinarily deep levels of rest, awakens the body's natural healing power by dissolving the stress. This affects all the contributory factors to obesity. As symptoms of underlying illness reduce, tendency to 'unintentional' weight gain will generally follow, and as our emotional state is improved and our digestive system becomes stronger, we are better able to metabolise our food and we find ourselves spontaneously eating a more balanced diet. Other important contributory factors will begin to improve as stress levels are reduced, including hormonal balance (*hormonal behavior*, 1978) and quality of sleep (e.g. *British Journal of Nursing*, 1995).

A study of adolescents with high-normal blood pressure found those practicing TM over an eight-month period to gain significantly less weight and body mass index (BMI) than the health-education control group (*Am. Jnl. of Hypertension*, 2009).

# Benefits on Mental Health

## **Addiction**

When asked to condemn the use of recreational drugs in the 1960's, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of TM, refused to do so. He explained that drug users were the same as everybody else in that their primary motivation for everything they did was the desire for happiness. All that was needed to relieve their resulting addiction, he said, was to point out to them that they were looking in the wrong place.

Also during the 20th century, the visionary psychologists James, Jung and Maslow, recognised the possibility of experiencing a *transcendental* level of the mind, and that this can profoundly impact the quality and meaning of life.

The ancient traditions of both East and West, have long maintained that the deepest need of humanity is to "know the Self", this level of universal consciousness, one's own essential Being, which is a state of pure happiness. The Eastern traditions, as Maharishi so clearly stated, had also pointed out that all cravings (or addictions) are misguided expressions of this fundamental desire for the experience of our own ultimate blissful nature.

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*"Within a week [of learning TM] I stopped drinking, the last habit I picked up under the pressure of my work. Two weeks later I quit smoking. ...I didn't need the taste, I began to feel extraordinarily well".*

**Dr Deepak Chopra (from his book, *Return of the Rishi*)**

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By providing a natural, effortless experience of the sufferer's innate inner happiness, TM not only gratifies this unconscious craving for direct Self-knowledge, but also holistically nourishes the levels of ego, feelings, thought and action that spring from this source. It is therefore capable of simultaneously relieving problems related to substance abuse on all these more manifest levels of life. It is not in itself a rehabilitation programme, but a means for self-development which results in a decrease of psychological problems. Reduced drug abuse is an automatic side effect. Since TM strengthens the individual and produces an overall and stable state of well-being, it naturally removes the need and craving for drugs.

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*"After my first weekend retreat as a new meditator I gave up smoking and found the taste of alcohol distasteful...It created within me a heightened sense of awareness and a deep internal cleansing..."* **Bee Roberts**  
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From the physiological perspective, chronic stress causes long-term imbalance in the body, which creates ongoing psychological distress and reduces ability to cope. Substance abuse can be viewed as 'self-medication' in an attempt to feel better by restoring balance to the nervous system, but unfortunately it gives rise to further imbalance and consequent dysfunction in the longer term. TM provides deep relaxation that naturally produces the balancing effect sought by the sufferer, making the use of drugs unnecessary, and with time naturally redundant.

There have been many individual studies and reviews of the benefits of TM for mental health and reduced substance use (tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescribed drugs) in a wide variety of settings, both in general populations and amongst heavy users. A systematic review and meta-analysis of 198 studies (including 19 on TM) found that TM produced sustained and highly significant reductions in smoking, alcohol and drug use, with effect sizes nearly twice as large as those for other treatments including standard therapies, other forms of meditation, relaxation, education, anxiety management, counselling, biofeedback, hypnosis,



and acupuncture. Over 18-24 months, abstinence ranged from 51% to 89% for people practicing TM, compared to 21% for conventional programmes. Also, reductions in smoking and alcohol consumption with TM increased gradually over time and initial marked reductions in illicit drug use were sustained, in contrast to high early relapse rates with standard programmes in both. The research indicates that TM simultaneously deals with several physiological and psychological factors underlying addiction, providing not only immediate relief from distress but also long-term improvements including well-being, self-esteem, and empowerment. (*Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 1994).

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD affects multiple thinking processes, with deficits including impulsivity, lack of normal social inhibition, impaired working memory, inability to focus attention, and impaired temporal organisation.

Stress has been found to compromise all of the major executive functions, including concentration and focus. This makes sense given that during the fight or flight response it was not of evolutionary advantage to our survival to stop and consider what to do next when faced with immediate danger!

Recent research has indicated that children with ADHD have dysfunction in a region of the brain responsible for developing coping strategies, which influences their ability to manage life's challenges. The high cortisol levels which result have been found to impair executive function, self-regulation, and letter knowledge in children with ADHD.

Meditation Trust teachers have taught a number of children with an ADHD diagnosis and have witnessed the improvements in symptoms that can occur, which preliminary research has also indicated. It is likely that these reductions in anxiety and stress and improvements in ADHD symptoms reflect the effects of dissolving accumulated stress from the nervous system and normalisation of the stress response with the practice of TM over time.

Since TM does not take long to learn and does not involve concentration or control of the mind, this practice is easy even for those experiencing ADHD symptoms. It allows the mind to settle down, and the body cannot help but follow. Over time, the stillness found during meditation begins to extend into activity and people very quickly begin to report feeling calmer and more relaxed in their everyday life.

A large body of research indicates that TM helps improve a whole range of cognitive processes, emotions and behaviours which are commonly found to be affected in ADHD. A systematic review of 146 independent outcomes found that TM was more than twice as effective in reducing anxiety as other techniques (including progressive muscular relaxation, methods claimed to induce a 'relaxation response', and other forms of meditation) (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 1989).

School students practicing TM showed improvements in: behaviour, decreased absenteeism and rule-breaking, and reduced behaviour-related suspensions (*Health Quality of Life Outcomes*, 2010) increased emotional regulation, and improved well-being (*Explore*, 2006) improved academic performance (*Education*, 1989) accelerated cognitive development, improved concept learning, and improved focus and attention in children (*Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 2005).

One initial study explored the effects of TM specifically on children with a diagnosis of ADHD. They continued to practice TM twice a day at school. After three months of practice, statistically significant reductions in anxiety and stress, and improvements in ADHD symptoms and executive function were found (*Current Issues in Education*, 2008)

## **Autism**

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioural challenges, affecting each person differently and ranging from very mild to severe. People with ASDs

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handle information in their brain differently from others. They have impaired prefrontal cortex (PFC) function, which is crucial for making good decisions and judgments.

Dealing with the challenges of a developmental disorder like autism or Asperger syndrome can increase the normal stress of life tremendously for both sufferers and carers. Difficulties understanding the emotions and expectations of others, fearing novel, unexpected situations and lack of control makes social interaction challenging and withdrawal understandable.

TM reduces stress and anxiety, and also seems to boost PFC functioning in people with ASD, which allows for more flexibility, sociability, and ability to cope with novelty. They become more willing to explore new environments and behaviours after they start to meditate, and sleep appears to improve considerably.

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*"The greatest feedback I ever received in my life came from my son...he was diagnosed with Autism at 4. He displayed all delays and all characteristics...I tried every possibility to help him improve. Yesterday morning as i was encouraging him to spread jam on his bread out of the blue he said " you have love on your face". Excuse me what did you say? I replied and encouraged him to look up. Looking at my face he repeated "you have Love on your face". I was speechless and overflowed with joy. Of all the avenues I have tried Transcendental Meditation has opened a new dimension. It is the most effective magical experience of my life...opening my heart like never before. I am seeing differently and I feel freedom like i never felt before and it reflects on my children."* **Azraladora**  
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## **Anxiety and Depression**

For some, life's challenging events can result in short-term reactive symptoms; but for others, anxiety and depression can be more severe and enduring, creating

a cycle of reduced coping power and increased symptoms, making normal daily functioning almost impossible.

There are a number of psychological therapies which help alleviate symptoms, e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which helps break the cycle by becoming more aware of thoughts, feelings and behaviour and learning how to change these. Other aspects of therapy may explore our past and the beliefs we have formed which continue to affect us. More recent use of 'mindfulness' techniques help us train the mind to be in the present moment rather than caught up in thoughts about the past or future.

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*"I suffered from depression, lots of ups and downs, periods of darkness, never knowing when it would end, totally alone. For years I didn't know where to turn. The tragic loss of my own brother to suicide made me think there must be another way to live your life. Luckily for me I came across TM 11 years ago, so off I went to London to learn this technique, I thought what have got to lose, nothing at all. After that very first session of meditation I opened my eyes and realised this is what I've been searching for, it was so easy and I'd known it all along in myself. I laughed so much inside. At last I found myself again. It was such a relief to know I could now do this meditation anywhere, anytime, The benefits of TM go on and on. It's a life-changing tool and is there for us all. My heart goes out to anyone in any suffering – we all want the same thing, Happiness, a place of quietness, it's inside you. It can really help you overcome depression".* **Wayne Robbins.**  
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Instead of working on the symptoms, TM works on the cause of the symptoms which is the stress in the physiology. As the stress, the biochemical residue of the fight or flight response, is dissolved through deep rest, "*cleaning the doors of perception*" (W.Blake), the mind is allowed to return to normal functioning. This is not just breaking the cycle, but reversing the cycle, since the less stress in the

system, the clearer our perceptions, so less stress is then created in future. We start spontaneously to live more in the present moment, anxiety and depression are reduced, enabling automatic management and reduction of many symptoms, including panic attacks, social anxiety, phobias and OCD.

Many people particularly like practicing TM because it is a natural, yet effective method. They also feel back in control and responsible for their own recovery. Also effects are cumulative over time.

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*"I have tried different types of meditation in the past, but none have worked for me as well as TM. After being made redundant last year and failing to find employment, I was beginning to feel very despondent, stressed and anxious. After only a few days of meditating I realised that I am in the right place, for me to be, at the present moment in time...the stress and anxiety I was experiencing have gone. It is so lovely not to wake up each morning with an anxious knot in the pit of my stomach. My partner has noticed a difference in me too."***Jill Jones.**  
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The Trust's TM teachers have witnessed improvements in many of their students which support the research findings. Our own research, in which the effect of TM on a small number of individuals was explored in depth through a series of case studies, supported our observations as teachers. There can sometimes be a quite dramatic reduction in anxiety symptoms, whereas depression, depending on its type and history, can take varying lengths of time to show improvements. But significant improvements there most definitely have been where students have maintained regular practice and contact with their teacher. This can even extend in some cases to the curing of addiction to prescribed medication.

A systematic review of 146 independent outcomes found that TM was more than twice as effective in reducing anxiety as other techniques (including progressive

muscular relaxation, 'relaxation response', and other forms of meditation). Only TM showed a positive correlation between duration of regular practice and reduction of anxiety (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 1989). Some research has also indicated a reduction in symptoms of depression over time (e.g. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1976)

## **Bereavement**

Our teachers have helped many grieving people deal with their bereavement through the practice of TM. Sufferers have often commented on the fading of their grief being accompanied by a re-emergence of numerous memories of their lost loved one, not only the wonderful times, but even the 'bad memories', which are found no longer to have any power. In reality it is not the memory itself which creates the problem, but stress which creates the suffering out of the memory. So as the stress disappears, suffering fades but memories are sharper.

## **Cognitive functioning – Memory, Intelligence etc.**

Prolonged stress not only affects our health and drains our energy, but it can actually kill brain cells and shrink the brain's main memory structures, affecting attention, memory, organisation and integration. Recent research suggests that elevated levels of stress steroids in the brain during activation of the stress response may inhibit general brain activity, and accelerate the development of Alzheimer disease, including impairment of memory and learning at an earlier early stage of the disease than normally expected. Stress also reduces the size of frontal (executive centre) and hippocampal (memory) volume. (*Proceedings of Nat. Ac. Sciences*, 2009)

It is no surprise, then, that with stress being released as a result of deep rest during TM practice, reducing mental 'chatter', research has indicated that the practice of TM can significantly increase 'field intelligence' (associated with greater organisation of mind and clarity of thought, improved memory, increased creative

expression, and increased ability to assimilate and structure experience) (*Perceptual Motor Skills*, 1986), improve short-term memory (*Memory and Cognition*, 1982), and increase creative thinking (*Journal of Creative Behaviour*, 1979).

Also, unique to this technique, widespread brainwave coherence has been shown to be created, giving us greater access to vast subconscious information, making the brain healthier and able to function together as a whole (e.g. *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 2001). When frontal brain areas are more coherent, the executive functions with which they are associated (e.g. decision making, planning, short-term memory, moral reasoning) are enhanced. We start to be able to achieve more optimal functioning and reach our full potential.

Research in educational settings has found TM practice to improve academic performance (*Education*, 1989) and accelerate cognitive development, improved concept learning, and improved focus and attention in children (*Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 2005). Additionally, the children practicing TM showed increased emotional regulation, and improved well-being (*Explore*, 2006) and behaviour (e.g. decreased absenteeism, rule-breaking, and behaviour-related suspensions) (*Health Quality of Life Outcomes*, 2010). Masters degree students were found to significantly improve in performance on their standard examinations after six months (*British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1985).

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"It cleared my thinking so incredibly quickly...clarity of thought. Now  
I can not imagine my life without TM." **Ken Darlington**  
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## **PTSD**

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) results from the experience or witnessing of traumatic or life-threatening events. Symptoms include recurring thoughts, memories, nightmares or flashbacks of the event, numbness, avoidance and hyper arousal, all of which can severely impair the person's daily life and be life threatening. PTSD can develop days, weeks, months or even years after

the traumatic event. Complex PTSD, which is also referred to as 'disorder of extreme stress', results from exposure to prolonged traumatic circumstances. PTSD has been described as a 'growing epidemic' in the last decade since the addition of thousands of cases amongst troops returning from war zones to the already serious civilian problem.

In TM terminology, deriving from the ancient yoga system, undue pressure of experience, whether mental or physical, results in structural and biochemical abnormalities ('stress') in the body, which at their subtlest level are blockages of negative energy. It is these 'cellular memories' rather than mental memories that cause the continuing experience of both physical and mental illness. During the practice of TM, the state of 'transcendental consciousness', (or silence) accompanied by uniquely deep levels of physical rest, allows release of accumulated stress (known in Yoga literature as *samskara* or impressions, 'scars' in the nervous system). It is this release of stress that is said to be responsible for the restoration of normal functioning of various systems in the body, particularly those involved in adapting to environmental challenges. Psychological symptoms, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD are seen as the result of these physiological abnormalities distorting mental experience as the body tries to let go of the enormous pressure of the blocked energy. During TM, the physical release occurs naturally, spontaneously, and at a comfortable rate, relieving the psychological symptoms without any attention being given to the symptoms themselves. For this reason, TM is very compatible alongside other treatments including psychological therapy which addresses symptoms from a more surface level of the mind (indeed research and anecdotal evidence has suggested that TM may enhance the effects of psychotherapy).

The Meditation Trust is currently undertaking research on PTSD to include both war veterans and civilians suffering symptoms from other traumatic events. Course fees will be subsidised for all participants. If you have a diagnosis of PTSD and would like to be considered for participation, please contact our office.

A number of studies abroad have already looked at the effect of TM on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A study of Vietnam War veterans practicing TM



over a three-month period showed improvements in all aspects of PTSD, with significant decreases in depression, anxiety, insomnia, and alcohol consumption; improvement in family problems; reduced severity of delayed stress syndrome; decreased emotional numbness; and reduced difficulty in obtaining employment. In contrast, the control group who received standard treatment with psychotherapy showed no significant change on any measure (*Brooks & Scarano, 1985*). More recently in a small scale pilot study of war veterans, reductions of PTSD symptoms were indicated following TM practice, especially hyper-arousal symptoms associated with an exaggerated sympathetic response to stress and other stimuli. Substantial reductions in blood pressure and stress reactivity have been indicated alongside other symptoms of PTSD, and quality of life improved (*Mil. Med. 2011*). In another pilot study (*Jnl. Trauma Stress, 2013*), a sustained significant reduction in severe PTSD symptoms in Congolese refugees was found, in contrast to increases in the control group.

# How to Learn Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation is taught in a comprehensive structured course of four sessions, the first lasting 1 hour, and the others up to 2.5 hours. During these sessions you will gain the ability to practice the technique correctly and effortlessly on your own. For the convenience of participants learning transcendental meditation the course is usually taught over three consecutive days, normally a weekend, which allows time to gain the experience upon which full understanding can be built. You will find most public courses in a non-residential setting, but they are also available residentially, and by arrangement in your business or privately.

## **Course Outline**

### **Personal Instruction – by appointment**

In this session you learn on a one-to-one basis with your instructor because experiences and requirements vary and may need further explanation.

The key to TM is the passing on of a mantra (sound) in the same way as it has been passed down for thousands of years in the yoga tradition. This starts with a short ceremony chanted in Sanskrit, the language of yoga, in gratitude (not worship as in religion) from the teacher to the tradition, which you just watch. This settles the atmosphere and produces a deep level of silence in the teacher, enabling the mantra to be passed on in just the right way to ensure effectiveness of teaching. After some time meditating under the instruction of your teacher, you will be given the experience of meditating on your own for a short time to build your

confidence, and the session ends with further one to one discussion with your teacher.

You then know enough to go home and practise on your own, morning and evening. However, experiences at home will vary, bringing up questions and doubts in your mind. You therefore return with everyone else who learned on the first day for three group sessions of up to 2.5 hours each.

### **First Group Meeting: Verifying Correct Practice**

This and the following meetings build up your understanding and confidence by reference to the group's experiences in and out of meditation (you don't have to speak if you don't want to!). You will learn how to recognise correct practice, and practical details such as how to begin and end meditation, when best to meditate, when you can do extra, and how to deal with noise or disturbances.

### **Second Group Meeting: Understanding the Mechanics of Meditation**

This session is for most people a major break-through as you begin to understand the intimacy of the mind/body connection, how accumulated stress and tension is released from the nervous system and the effect of this on mental experience. The role of thoughts in meditation begins to be understood, leading to enhancement of experience and satisfaction.

### **Third Group Meeting: Developing Higher States of Consciousness – The Spiritual Mechanics of Nature**

Again with reference to our experiences, we examine the cumulative benefits of effortless yogic meditation in terms of the development of our full human potential ('enlightenment'). We begin to discover the wonderful truth of who we really are according to Yoga, and how Nature's invincible force of evolution will support our every thought and action and the effortless fulfillment of our deepest desires if we allow it to happen.

### **Follow-up**

Although you can practise on your own at home, to gain maximum enjoyment and progress, it is recommended that you stay in touch with your teacher. Basic support and guidance, including group meditation meetings, should be available to you free for the rest of your life. You will also have the opportunity to attend retreats and advanced courses if you wish, and these will produce significant extra progress.

# The MEDITATION TRUST



**Registered charity: 1081218**

The Meditation Trust was established as a registered charity in 2000 with a mission to make Transcendental Meditation (TM) accessible and affordable for all. With a fee structure up to 50% lower than other UK courses, and up to 80% lower than European prices, this allows anyone with a desire for TM's huge range of potential benefits, indicated by scientific research, access to the authentic, ancient teachings. The addition of a bursary fund, established by our experienced meditators to help those who are not able to afford our lowest course fees, has increased this availability.

Highly experienced, professional teachers, trained as directed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, offer expert guidance in this simple, effortless meditation which brings wide-ranging, integrative results more quickly and profoundly than concentration, visualisation or mindfulness. Individual instruction followed by three group sessions, over three or four consecutive days, leaves you with a valuable skill. Further guidance, free for life, ensures complete satisfaction, because Transcendental Meditation automatically works for everyone, regardless of age, background, belief or ability.

Visit our website for more information on courses and learning to meditate:



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