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**Mindfulness  
Meditation to  
help with  
PTSD**

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health issue that some people develop after they have been exposed to a shocking event in their life. It can be a life-threatening situation, combat, incarceration, natural disaster, sexual assault or similar.

US. Department of Veteran Affairs stated that 8 out of 100 veterans clearly experience PTSD. They have stated that it is normal to have upsetting memories and feelings, however if they last over a few months, it is time to get help. Majority of people diagnosed with PTSD are prescribed psychotherapy which is 53% effective and medication which is 46% effective in average.

We at Ahimsa Meditation refer to mindfulness meditation as psychotechnology. It is a practice to help people suffering with first symptoms of PTSD to cope with it and potentially fully recover before it goes any further. Though it is also very effective as a complementary practice to help sufferers who are taking medication or attending psychotherapy sessions.

## Scientists agree that mindfulness meditation helps with PTSD

Meditation can help with common mental health issues like OCD, PTSD, panic attacks (from “The Effortless Mind” by Will Williams, founder of World Meditation Day).

Researchers from Maharishi International University taught meditation to prisoners with standard prison program as a comparison. They found that 4 months later the prisoners doing meditation showed fewer symptoms of trauma, anxiety, depression; they also slept better and perceived their days as less stressful (from S. Nidich et al., “Reduced trauma symptoms and perceived stress in male prison inmates through Transcendental Meditation Program” in Permanente Journal 2016; doi.org/10.7812/TPP/116-007)



Prison Mindfulness Institute offers a 6 weeks mindfulness course dedicated to nurturing inner peace and more effective rehabilitation for prisoners and ex-convicts. Resettlement programmes in the United Kingdom prisons also feature mindfulness as a pathway to effective rehabilitation after incarceration.

It is not surprising that both ex-military, police force and prisoners are recipients of mindfulness meditation practice sessions specially designed to help or in some cases even prevent PTSD. [See more information and scientific references on meditation practice benefits.](#)

Mental health is important and mindfulness is an integral part of the treatment of various psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), borderline personality disorder and more (*from “The rough guide to mindfulness” by Albert Tobler and Susann Herrmann*).

Mindfulness training may indeed build up the “mental muscle” in these brain regions in people who are trying to change addictive behaviours, so they are able to notice cravings and related self-referential thinking patterns, allowing them to ‘ride this wave’ of experience rather than being sucked into it.

Randomised control trials demonstrated improvement through mindfulness training for a long list of conditions: coping with diabetes, cancer, chronic pain, work stress, chronic fatigue syndrome, stress eating, HIV quality of life, smoking cessation, hot flashes, insomnia, substance use disorder (*from “Mindfulness and Psychotherapy” 2nd Edition by C. Germer, R. Siegel, P. Fulton.*)

For PTSD and everyone’s suffering from a traumatic experiences in the past, we introduce an element of ‘clarification of values’ mediation to extend participant’s circle of compassion and nonviolence; this is done by means of mindfulness meditation.

## Mindfulness meditation invites your fear for tea

Trauma related and PTSD themed mindfulness meditation simply wants to invite fear for tea to have a chat, look at it, observe and simply accept.

*'What we cannot hold, we cannot process, what we cannot process, we cannot transform. What we cannot transform, we cannot transform haunts us'.*

With post-traumatic stress disorder, we would like to focus on two characteristics that would be great to contemplate during your practice to help deal with your PTSD. These are:

- impermanence , which allows anyone to stop being reluctant to accept that everything is changing all the time;
- suffering that occurs as a result of clinging to our day-to-day desires.

## How do you employ mindfulness meditation to help with PTSD?



- Practicing meditation is really easy and you can try it right now with these simple instructions for a concentration meditation on breathing with elements of vipassana meditation:
- Find a quiet place and set your alarm for an initial 10 minutes or more.
- Sit cross-legged on a floor (use a mat and a cushion to level your hips with your knees), place your arms on your lap. Only sit on a firm chair if cross legged position is very uncomfortable. In

general, your posture should be fairly relaxed but not sluggish, so you won't meditate yourself to sleep.

- Take a few really deep breaths as so other people would be likely to hear you breathing. It should make you feel relaxed.
- Close your eyes and start paying attention to sounds, smells, your posture and breathing. Simply make a mental note on what you are observing. No need to judge it or dwell on it.



- Pay attention to how your body feels. Start doing so by scanning your body from top to bottom and notice how even the smallest parts of your body feel. Don't try to change anything or judge. It's all good, you are being attentive, that's it.
- Move the focus of your attention to your breathing. Do not try to change it, just let it be. No judgement please, do not allow to be violent towards yourself. Notice where in your body breathing starts, how it flows and how it ends. To help you settle with this pattern, you can start counting your breaths from 1 to 10 and then revert back to 1. If your attention shifts to something else, notice the very fact of this happening and then gently get your mind to count the breaths again and again. These 'jumps' happen all the time, so be kind to yourself. The more skillful you become, the less monkey-like your mind learns to be. Every single time your mind gets back to counting breaths, it also gets stronger. This gives your mind a proper training.
- When you have established a good concentration on breathing, invite your mind to contemplate on the fact that all things change; it is just the way of life. Think about life and death, but also about these traumatic experiences that



get you where you are now. These will change too. This is what it's called impermanence. Accept it and relieve yourself from a pressure of traumatic stress factors.

- Obviously, these stress factors come with dissatisfaction and sometimes suffering. It happens because you cling to positive states, and quite naturally averse to things that cause you pain. You want to get rid of your traumatic experience and get back to happy memories. Yet the issue is that it doesn't

usually help. It only creates more stress. If you look directly at your trauma and try and make friends with it, you can contemplate whether you can simply let go of your attachment to that trauma. This will definitely alleviate your stress. If you cannot just let go of it, simply say 'yes I accept my [your own traumatic experience goes here], and that's why I feel stressed'.

- You acknowledge your suffering and, paradoxically, it will subside. You will feel it less and with time it will disappear.



- These two very specific but open contemplation themes are going to change on a daily basis. Things change, so it your meditation practice. Yet with time you will become familiar with both of these characteristics and your level of stress will gradually lessen. You will accept these as universal truth. Everyone experiences dissatisfaction and all things are impermanent. Your full acceptance and absence of clinging are key to lower your stress.
- Something that will get you an emotional boost are your values. Contemplate about what they are for you. Why do you wake up in the morning? Is it something that you do, how you serve others, how you connect with other people? How do you help your kids or maybe your customers? Re-connect with your inner values, feel the power of them. Contemplate them during your meditation.
- Continue for your set amount of time. When finished, allow your mind to rest for 30 seconds with no focus on anything at all. Just observe and let it simply flow.
- Finish by making a mental note how you feel now, what you are going to do next and open your eyes.

You have just completed a session of mind training or cultivation that specifically targeting PTSD.

*“If you allow awareness to embrace your doubt, your unhappiness, your confusion, your anxiety, your pain, these mental states cease to be ‘yours’. They revert to being recognised as merely ‘weather patterns’ in the mind and body” (from “Falling Awake” by Kabat-Zinn).*



## Be aware of your trauma and your stress will lessen



This awareness or self-observation practice will help you to come to terms to whatever was giving you that much of stress.

It is a gradual process.

It is a journey, but it is so much worth doing. Try it today or forward this guide to people who may need it.



We aim to engage with ex-military, police force, ex-prisoners and victims of violence or sexual abuse to help them overcome this enormous trauma.

Connect with us, support us and let's cultivate inner peace together.

Visit <https://AhimsaMeditation.org>

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