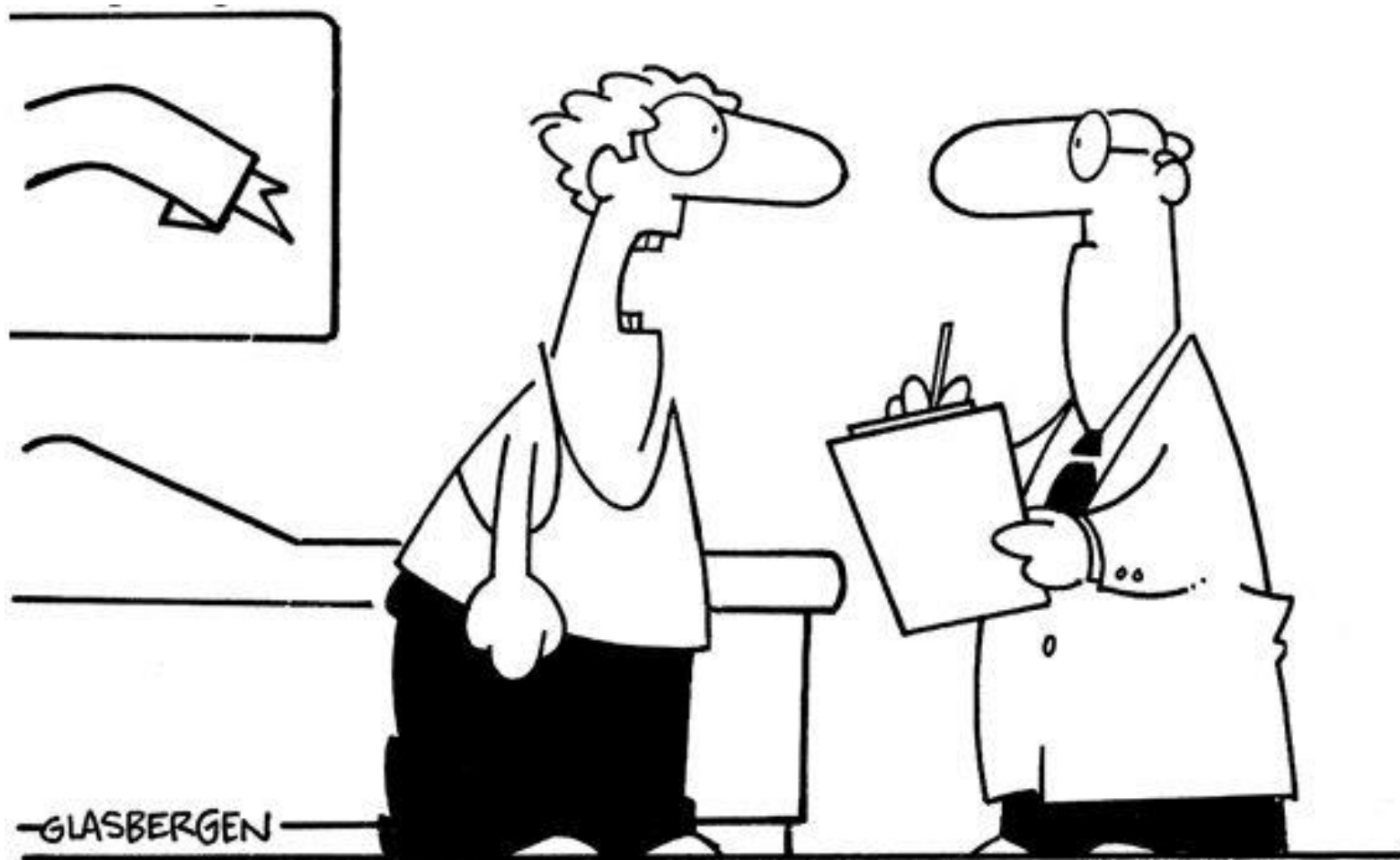




GUIDED MEDITATION FOR STRESS REDUCTION

Eastern Highlands Health District
Fall 2020



**“I’m learning how to relax, doctor —
but I want to relax *better* and *faster*!
I want to be on the cutting edge of relaxation!”**

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is considered a type of mind-body complementary medicine. Meditation can produce a deep state of relaxation and a tranquil mind.

During meditation, you focus your attention and eliminate the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. This process may result in enhanced physical and emotional well-being.

Music may also help you relax during meditation.

MEDITATION

When starting a meditation practice, the first question to ask is if you want it to be guided or unguided. The preference is going to differ from person to person, but before deciding what best suits you, it's worth exploring what each option involves.

GUIDED MEDITATION

In a guided meditation, a narrator or teacher explains the dynamics of the mind and how it's likely to behave during meditation. (This is the approach.) The teacher may also explain meditation techniques. (This is the practice.) Finally, the teacher may explain how to take these techniques into everyday life. (This is the integration.)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDITATION?

Some research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and depression, and insomnia. Evidence about its effectiveness for pain and as a smoking-cessation treatment is uncertain.

PARTICIPANTS IN MINDFULNESS COURSES CONSISTENTLY REPORT

Reduction of:

Stress

Anxiety

Depression

Pain

Insomnia

Improvement of:

Concentration

Memory

Overall Quality of Life

* As reported by **Melissa Hemphill, MD**

Providence Oregon Family Medicine Residency Oregon Academy of Family Physicians, March 2016

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE SAFETY OF MEDITATION?

Meditation is generally considered to be safe for healthy people. However, people with physical limitations may not be able to participate in certain meditative practices involving movement.

*Meditation: In Depth, *National Institutes of Health*

DOUBLE CLICK ON THE IMAGE



THE FOLLOWING IS A READING FOR A GUIDED MEDITATION. READ IT THROUGH ONCE AND THEN READ IT THROUGH SLOWLY RELAXING AND PAUSING TO TAKE THE INFORMATION IN.



SAY GOODBYE TO WORRY: HOT AIR BALLOON



Make yourself comfortable, and close your eyes. Take a slow deep breath, and let go of any tension, as you feel yourself sinking into the surface you're resting on, becoming still more comfortable and relaxed. Take another slow, deep breath, and release your thoughts, letting them drift far away. And take another slow, deep breath, and know that in this moment, all is well.

(CONTINUE TO TAKE RELAXING BREATHS)

Imagine you're walking in a wide open grassy field in the country, just before dawn on a crisp fall morning. It's quiet, and there's some early morning fog rising from the ground. As you walk along, you can feel the uneven ground beneath your feet.

You're carrying a heavy backpack, and it's filled with all the worries that have been weighing on you lately. You could enjoy the morning so much more if you were to put that down, but you just haven't felt ready to do that yet. So you continue walking on, through the field.

(CONTINUE TO TAKE SLOW DEEP BREATHS)

Soon you begin to make out some kind of large, round shape coming up out of the fog, a little way ahead. And as you come closer, you see that it's a hot air balloon, just finishing filling up. The basket is tied down with 4 ropes, staked into the ground on all sides. There's a burner above the basket, heating the balloon. And the balloon itself is made of colorful sections of material, arranged in strips, running top to bottom. It's quite a sight to behold.

There's a brass plaque on the side of the basket, and as you take a closer look, you see that it has your name written upon it in ornate, scrolled letters. And printed below your name are the words, "Let the healing begin!" Well, that sounds promising! Now you know where you can put your backpack full of worries.

(RELAX)

Better take a last look at them, just to make sure. Pull your heavy backpack off your shoulders, one strap at a time, and put it down. Take each worry out of the backpack, one at a time. What do worries look like? They could look like anything. Some people's look like globs of grey goop. Some look like spiky metal balls. Some peoples' look more

(RELAX)

like old musty encyclopedia volumes. Take each worry out of your backpack, take a look at it to be sure you know what it is, become certain you'd like to let it go, and toss it into the basket. Take a few moments to do this for each and every worry.

Once you've gotten all the worries out of the backpack, and tossed them into the basket below the balloon, go ahead and toss the backpack in there too. You won't be needing that now.

(RELAX)


The basket is filled up, and now the balloon is completely inflated and ready to go. It's pulling hard against the ropes, and looks eager to take off. Look down to your right and you'll see a big knife in a leather sheath. Pick it up, and pull off the sheath. The blade is gleaming stainless steel, and very, very sharp. It's going to feel really good to cut those four ropes with this knife.

Go to the first rope, and cut it with the knife. It cuts like butter, and the balloon shakes a little, leaning a bit to one side. This is good.

(RELAX)

Cut the third rope, and the balloon leans toward the side of the last one, straining hard and ready to take off.

You're ready too, to say bye-bye to your worries, and the balloon. Cut that last rope, and the balloon begins to rise.




As the balloon ascends, you begin to feel freer. And as it rises further, ties you may have still had to any worries become thinner. The balloon goes higher, and higher, gets smaller, and smaller till you can barely see it. And now... it's gone. Nothing in the sky but a few puffy white clouds, and a flock of geese, way up there, flying in a "V" formation, migrating toward their winter home.

(RELAX)


You're free. Imagine everything ahead of you in your life working out perfectly. Visualize all your affairs going exactly the way you'd like them to go. Be happy, look forward to your life. Put your mind in good order. Take a few moments to do this now.

It's a little later in the morning now, and you walk on through the field to the other side. And as you come to the edge of the field, you notice the scene has changed to a



setting somewhere in your every day life, one that is very positive, and enjoyable for you. Put yourself as fully as possible into this positive, happy scene, and take a few moments to enjoy it.

It's almost time to bring this inner journey to a close. But first, take a moment to thank yourself for giving yourself this gift.



Gradually bring your awareness back to your physical surroundings. Take your time, and when you're ready, open your eyes, and feel awake, alert, and refreshed.

Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Come back to attention slowly.

RESOURCES

[National Institutes Health \(NIH\)](#)

[Coping with Stress, Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Headspace](#)

[Yoga with Lisa](#)



BE WELL

To get credit for this class please go to [Meditation](#) and take a brief survey.