

Week 3: What are the benefits of practicing mindfulness?

- **It is good for our bodies.** A seminal study found that after just eight weeks of mindfulness training, practicing mindfulness meditation boosts our immune system's ability to fight off illness.

Mindfulness can;

- Relieve stress
- Treat heart disease
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce chronic pain
- Improve sleep

- **It is good for our minds:** Several studies have found that mindfulness increases positive emotions while reducing negative emotions and stress. Indeed, at least one study suggests it may be as good as antidepressants in fighting depression and preventing relapse.

It can help a number of problems such as:

- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Eating disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder

- **Mindfulness changes our brains:** Research has found that it increases density of gray matter in brain regions linked to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and empathy.
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- **Mindfulness helps us focus:** Studies suggest that mindfulness helps us tune out distractions and improves our memory and attention skills.
- **Mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism:** Research suggests mindfulness training makes us more likely to help someone in need and increases activity in neural networks involved in understanding the suffering of others and regulating emotions. Evidence suggests it might boost self-compassion as well.
- **Mindfulness enhances relationships:** Research suggests mindfulness training makes couples more satisfied with their relationship, makes each partner feel more optimistic and relaxed, and makes them feel more accepting of and closer to one another.

- **Mindfulness is good for parents and parents-to-be:** Studies suggest it may reduce pregnancy-related anxiety, stress, and depression in expectant parents. Parents who practice mindfulness report being happier with their parenting skills and their relationship with their kids, and their kids were found to have better social skills.
- **Mindfulness fights obesity:** Practicing “mindful eating” encourages healthier eating habits, helps people lose weight, and helps them savor the food they do eat.

****I suggest you really go read up about mindfulness online and perhaps even consider a course in mindfulness training.