

Meditation: different approaches, different benefits

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(HealthDay)—Deep breathing is a great stress reliever, and the

technique called mindfulness meditation is a helpful way to use breathing to get more in touch with your inner self.

People who meditate say they feel more positive, and have more energy and better concentration.

There's more than one way to tap meditation's benefits—through variations in technique. A study published in the journal *Mindfulness* looked at what can be gained from a few popular approaches.

Body scan. With body scan meditation, you focus on each body part, one at a time, from your head to your feet. When paired with focused [breathing](#), [study participants](#) sharply reduced their number of negative thoughts, and thoughts about the future and the past. Body scan can help you feel more centered and focused on the "now."

Loving-kindness. This type of meditation helps you deepen positive feelings for a loved one as well as for yourself, your extended social circle, and beyond. This type of meditation led to the greatest boost in participants' feelings of warm, positive thoughts about others. It can be a good approach if you're facing interpersonal conflicts.

Observing-thought. This type of meditation teaches you to recognize and define thoughts—as negative or positive, for instance—without becoming absorbed in them. This practice helped participants become more aware of both thoughts and judgmental attitudes they held toward others. It also can stop rumination—the habit of repetitively going over distressing situations in your mind.

While [meditation](#) in general can help you feel more relaxed, different types offer additional benefits. Experiment to find those that bring you closer to your personal improvement goals.

More information: For more on choosing a type of mindful meditation, see [How to Choose a Type of Mindfulness Meditation](#).

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