

Live Well,
Work Well



Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction

A study by the American Institute of Stress found that more than half ([55%](#)) of Americans feel stress daily. Persistent stress can cause headaches, depression, insomnia, a weak immune system, fertility problems, and other mental and physical health issues. Given these side effects, you may be exploring ways to effectively manage your stress. One way to do so is with mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), an eight-week course designed to improve daily mindfulness.

What Is MBSR?

MBSR is a therapeutic technique founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., a professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The program promotes stress relief through basic principles of mindfulness and meditation. The practices taught may also help relieve pain, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve memory.

How Does MBSR Work?

Generally, MBSR programs are led by an instructor who guides participants through weekly yoga and meditation sessions. In these sessions, which typically run for two to three hours, you are encouraged to focus on the present and not to worry about the past or future. The following are examples of standard practices that may be taught during an MBSR session:

- Meditation
- Breathing techniques
- Journaling
- Yoga
- Experience-sharing

Although MBSR is meant to be done in a group setting with a certified instructor, you may also be assigned homework to practice mindfulness at home through mindful eating, stretching or meditative walking.

Who Can Benefit From MBSR?

MBSR may be able to benefit those who are exploring ways to improve or manage stress. When used in conjunction with other types of therapy, MBSR has been [found](#) to treat mental and physical health conditions, such as:

- Chronic pain
- Addiction
- Anxiety
- High blood pressure
- Immune disorders
- Eating disorders
- Fatigue
- Grief
- Heart disease
- Sleep disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorders
- Cancer
- Family, work and financial stress

Conclusion

Consistent stress can significantly negatively impact your mental and physical health. In some cases, stress reduction techniques, such as MBSR, have been found to help reduce stress. Consult your physician or a mental health professional for more information on ways to manage stress or anxiety.

[This article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical professional. © 2023 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.]