

Meditation Benefits for People with Cancer

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December 12, 2022 By Jennifer Cook

Meditation encompasses a wide variety of practices to calm the mind and body and enhance well-being. Some forms involve focusing on the breath, a sound, a visual image or a silently repeated word or phrase. Others include the practice of mindfulness, which focuses awareness on the present moment without judgment.

A 2019 analysis of 29 studies of mindfulness-based meditation that included a total of more than 3,000 people with cancer found that the practice significantly reduced psychological distress, anxiety, depression, fear of cancer recurrence, fatigue, sleep disturbances and pain. People with different kinds of cancer as well as those at different disease stages were found to benefit.

To get started, ask whether your oncologist knows of any classes or meditation teachers in your area. Some large comprehensive cancer centers offer this and other mind-body practices. You can also find links to meditation instruction by searching under “Meditation” on the [MD Anderson Cancer Center](#) and the [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#) websites. The free versions of the apps [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#), while not specifically geared to people with cancer, are also helpful.

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