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Walking Meditation

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Walking is probably one of the simplest and most accessible forms of exercise. Though we do it on a daily basis, we rarely stop to consider the true benefits of this seemingly trivial action.

Walking is not just a simple way of moving from point A to point B, or a healthy daily habit, but also an excellent opportunity for meditation. Yes, that's right! Walking can be a form of meditation, as long as you do it in a specific way.



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What Is Meditation?

We all know what walking is, but what about meditation? Well, it's a simple technique designed to calm your mind, by alleviating stress and other mental health issues.

When it comes to meditation, the first step is always finding the right position. This allows your mind and body to relax, by removing the unnecessary strain of muscle tension.

Some of us may find walking more relaxing than sitting down and it is a great opportunity to incorporate relaxation into exercising.

What Is Walking Meditation?

The whole point of meditation is to put you in a state of calm by preventing the mind from

wandering into the past or future. Body posture doesn't really matter, as long as you obtain the desired end result. With that in mind, there's absolutely no reason why walking and meditating can't mix.

Walking meditation is good for beginners because it allows them to focus on the process, without putting in too much effort.

Double the Benefit

Meditation eases negativity, improves cognitive functioning and allows you to find inner peace. Walking, on the other hand, is healthy for your body and has a certain rhythmicity, which makes it ideal for meditation techniques.

One of the main goals of depressed individuals is to increase physical activity, through behavioral activation. By using walking meditation you can improve your daily exercise routine [1] and alleviate ruminative thoughts, at the same time.

How to Do It

Choose a Route

Since meditation is about peace and relaxation, the quiet ambience of a park or forest trail is exactly what you need. If you can't reach a park or a forest, just take a short walk around the neighborhood. After all, the time and place may provide certain benefits, but they are not as important as the process. Still, make sure you avoid busy streets and crowded places.

Focus On Your Step

Start by focusing on your feet, how they move and touch the ground. Consider the sensation throughout your body as well – there might be a light breeze gently blowing in your face, you may feel the warmth of the sunrays upon the bare skin of your shoulders, etc.

By focusing on the body, your mind will gradually enter into a state of thoughtless awareness.

You can also use visual stimuli, especially those of natural surroundings, to benefit the process.

Let Your Thoughts Be

The key to effective relaxation is not to fight your negative thoughts, but to embrace them.

If at some point, a dark thought pops into your mind, try to acknowledge and accept it. Imagine that it were a person, to whom you are saying, "I see that you are here and that is alright. I am going to let you be, but I won't engage with you."

Remember that the harder you try to ignore thoughts, the more persistent they will be. Therefore, the best strategy is to let them pass through you.

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[1] <https://explorable.com/e/starting-an-exercise-program>