

## Meditation helps reduce high blood pressure

18th September 2023



High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is the leading preventable cause of heart disease. It affects an estimated 1.3 billion people worldwide. New guidelines from the International Society of Hypertension (ISH) include meditating for

45 minutes each day to reduce blood pressure. The ISH says "body and mind" goals should be adopted in conjunction with established advice, like cutting down on salt, limiting alcohol intake, and exercising regularly. Study author Dr Bryan Williams told the BBC: "It all sounds like it is a bit...fluffy, but these things make such an important contribution to reducing the effects of stress on the cardiovascular system, and the evidence is accumulating."

Hypertension is often referred to as the "silent killer" because it rarely presents symptoms. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart disease, heart failure, and stroke. It kills approximately 10 million people every year. Nearly half of Americans and 30 percent of people worldwide struggle with it. Dr Williams said: "There's so much people can do for themselves. All of us need to take a step back and...decompress and just relax." The American Heart Association also says meditating can help to lower blood pressure through "thoughtful awareness" or "restful alertness". The association reports that many studies show that "quieting the brain" benefits the cardiovascular system.

Sources: [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [Harvard.edu](http://Harvard.edu) / [nypost.com](http://nypost.com)

## Writing

Food makers should use almost no salt in their products. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

blood pressure / hypertension / heart disease / meditating / body / mind / goals / silent / symptoms / risk / stroke / struggle / relax / awareness / decompress / brain

## True / False

- 1) Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension. T / F
- 2) A guideline said 45 seconds of daily meditation reduces blood pressure. T / F
- 3) A guideline says meditating means people can have more salt. T / F
- 4) An author said evidence that meditation helps blood pressure is growing. T / F
- 5) People say high blood pressure is a silent killer. T / F
- 6) High blood pressure kills 100 million people every year. T / F
- 7) Around 30% of people around the world have high blood pressure. T / F
- 8) Studies show that keeping the brain active helps blood pressure. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>leading</b>      | a. embraced      |
| 2. <b>adopted</b>      | b. consciousness |
| 3. <b>limiting</b>     | c. growing       |
| 4. <b>evidence</b>     | d. signs         |
| 5. <b>accumulating</b> | e. grapple       |
| 6. <b>symptoms</b>     | f. main          |
| 7. <b>decompress</b>   | g. aids          |
| 8. <b>struggle</b>     | h. calm down     |
| 9. <b>awareness</b>    | i. proof         |
| 10. <b>benefits</b>    | j. restricting   |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about high blood pressure?
- b) How worried are you about high blood pressure?
- c) Why might meditation be good for high blood pressure?
- d) What do you think of meditation?
- e) How might 45 minutes of daily meditation help us?
- f) What do you need to do to lead a healthier lifestyle?
- g) What kinds of stress are there in your life?
- h) Why might meditating sound a bit 'fluffy'?

## Phrase Match

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. High blood pressure,           | a. an important contribution  |
| 2. the leading preventable        | b. a step back                |
| 3. in conjunction                 | c. cause of heart disease     |
| 4. these things make such         | d. and stroke                 |
| 5. the evidence                   | e. with established advice    |
| 6. Hypertension is often referred | f. struggle with it           |
| 7. heart disease, heart failure,  | g. also known as hypertension |
| 8. 30 percent of people worldwide | h. the cardiovascular system  |
| 9. All of us need to take         | i. to as the "silent killer"  |
| 10. quieting the brain benefits   | j. is accumulating            |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why do you think more hasn't been done to treat hypertension?
- What are the differences between heart attacks and strokes?
- What things do you do to 'decompress'?
- What do you think 'thoughtful awareness' is?
- What do you think 'restful alertness' is?
- What can we do to 'quieten the brain'?
- What would you like to ask the researchers?

## Spelling

- also known as rpheyneitson
- leading trlvnebapee cause of heart disease
- in tcninojnouc with established advice
- It all sounds like it is a bit luyfff
- make such an important ontriiitnoub
- the evidence is clcaiuaunmgt
- it rarely presents msstmpoy
- It kills petalyaoxpirm 10 million
- people worldwide sretgulg with it
- dercmpesso and just relax
- teginqui the brain
- the iraouvcdaslrac system

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. a	3. j	4. i	5. c
6. d	7. h	8. e	9. b	10. g

## Role Play

### Role A – Meditating

You think meditating is the best way to relax. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): reading, hiking or watching movies.

### Role B – Reading

You think reading is the best way to relax. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): meditating, hiking or watching movies.

### Role C – Hiking

You think hiking is the best way to relax. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): reading, meditating or watching movies.

### Role D – Watching Movies

You think watching movies is the best way to relax. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): reading, hiking or meditating.

## Speaking – Relaxing

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to relax at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • Meditating         | • Being with friends |
| • Listening to music | • Hiking             |
| • Reading            | • Taking a nap       |
| • Taking a bath      | • Watching movies    |

### Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.