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Meditate for your Health **Excerpted from Organic Style March 2004**

“Doctors now prescribe meditation for a host of illnesses, and many hospitals use the practice for everything from pain relief to disease management. ‘Everyone should incorporate meditation into their lives. I recommend it to all of my patients,’ says Woodson Merrell, M.D., executive director of the Continuum Center for Health and Healing at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York. Here are some conditions that meditation may help:

(Mental Health) Meditation activates the areas of the brain responsible for inducing positive emotions. According to research from the University of Wisconsin, it could be used to help treat mental conditions such as anxiety disorders and depression.”

How to Begin

- Aim for 20 minutes a day.
- Sit in any comfortable, upright position; chairs are fine.
- Begin by feeling your breath as it enters and leaves your nostrils.
- Your mind will wander. Don’t worry. Notice where it went and then gently bring your thoughts back to your breath.
- Feel free to change position when you need to.
- It’s okay if you fall asleep at first. Try to get enough sleep, and avoid meditating during your low-energy times of day.
- You will think and feel many things while you meditate. It’s all okay. Gently bring yourself back to the breath.
- Above all, have compassion for yourself. We all face our own challenges, but the rewards are well worth it if we are kind to ourselves.

-Sharon Salzberg