

[IMAGE]

Stressed Out? Try a Mantra

A mantra is a word or phrase that carries spiritual meaning to the person who repeats it. Originating in India centuries ago, the practice is now used by people the world over. A recent study indicates that learning mantras can prove useful in helping people cope with a wide range of conditions, and is particularly helpful in reducing stress and anxiety.

Researchers studied 66 people who participated in a five-week program, during which the subjects chose a mantra and learned how to use it to manage stress. Participants chose their own mantra, then were taught how to repeat it silently during the day or evening to interrupt unwanted thoughts or create a state of relaxation. Approximately three months after the program ended, they were interviewed and asked whether the mantra was helpful; if so, they were asked to provide examples of when they used the mantra to reduce stress.

Fifty-five people (83.3 percent) reported using mantras to help them cope with difficult situations. A majority of the participants said they practiced mantras to deal with anxiety. Other situations where mantras proved useful were managing stress from work or traffic, insomnia, and unwanted thoughts.

While practicing a mantra is often associated with certain faiths or traditions, the technique itself is nonpartisan. In addition, mantra use is inexpensive, portable, and produces no negative side-effects, making it an excellent form of stress relief for people with busy lifestyles. To learn more about mantras and other ways to reduce stress, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general/wellness/index.html.

Bormann JE, Oman D, Kemppainen JK, et al. Mantram repetition for stress management in veterans and employees: a critical incident study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* March 2006;53(5):502-512.

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