

EARN 1 CEU

EXCLUSIVE WEBINAR PRESENTATION

Meditation for Dietitians:
Applications in Science and Life

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Presented by **Jenna Hollenstein, MS, RDN, CDN**

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- **Affiliations:** Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, AND Behavioral Health Nutritionists, AND SCAN, AND Nutrition Entrepreneurs, IAEDP, Shambhala NYC Meditation Center.
- **Disclosures:** Jenna works with/for the Open Heart Project.

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Learning Objectives

After completing this continuing education course, nutrition professionals should be able to:

1. Provide a simple definition of meditation, including what it is and what it isn't.
2. Describe the personal benefits of a meditation practice.
3. Describe the professional benefits of a meditation practice for dietitians.
4. Describe the benefits of meditation to nutrition therapy clients.

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Our Plan

- What meditation is and isn't
- The science of meditation
- Why is meditation important for RDs?*

 - Personally
 - Professionally
 - For our clients

- Practice together
- Q&A



* don't take my word for it; try this out in your own life

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Who Am I?

- Personally
- Professionally
- Working with clients



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Meditation: Spirituality Meets Science

- “When neurons fire together, they wire together” ~psychologist Donald Hebb on how mental activity creates new neural structures
- Neuroplasticity: “The mind is what the brain does”
- Brain's survival strategies → suffering
- Path to wakefulness = training the mind



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Definition #1

"Meditation is not a matter of trying to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss, or tranquility, nor is it attempting to be a better person. It is simply the creation of a space in which we are able to expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes."

~Chogyam Trungpa

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Definition #2

Merriam-Webster:

To engage in mental exercise (as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness.



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Definition #3

"Substituting for our discursive mind another object of attention"

~ My meditation teacher, Susan Piver

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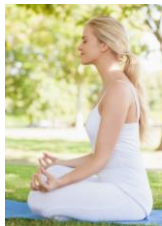
Types of Meditation

- Focused attention
 - **Shamatha**, Zen, Loving-kindness, Chakra, Kundalini, Sound, Mantra, Pranayama, Qigong
- Open monitoring
 - Mindfulness meditation, Vipassana, Taoist
- Effortless presence
 - Self-enquiry, Dzogchen, Mahamudra, Taoist, Raja
- Check out: <http://liveanddare.com/types-of-meditation/>

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What Meditation Is

- Synchronizing mind and body
 - Meditation vs. meditative activities
- Meditation = Mindfulness + Awareness
 - Mindfulness – technique
 - Awareness – insight
- A way to relax
(but not in the way you think!)



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What Meditation Isn't

- Religious
- Self-help
- Doing nothing
- A way to stop thinking/space out/calm down

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What Happens in the Brain

- Structure:
 - Increased gray matter in anterior cingulate cortex, prefrontal cortex, and hippocampus
 - Decreased brain cell volume in amygdala
 - Weakened connections between amygdala and prefrontal cortex
- Function:
 - Frontal lobe goes “offline”
 - Parietal lobe processing slows down
 - Thalamus slows down sensory inputs
 - Reticular formation decreases arousal

(Martino, Collective Evolution website, 2014)

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What Happens in the Body

- Lower cortisol levels
- Decreased symptoms associated with
 - Depression
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Pain
 - Insomnia
- Increased focus and concentration



(Jacobs et al., Health Psychol, 2013; Khoury et al., J Psychosom Res., 2017; Strauss et al., PLoS ONE, 2014; Zeidan et al., Neurosci Lett, 2012; Ong et al., Sleep, 2014; Black et al., JAMA Intern Med, 2015)

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Meditation Has Also Been Studied in:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Coronary heart disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Respiratory disease
- Rheumatic disease
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Immune function
- Inflammation
- PTSD
- Bipolar disorder
- Smoking cessation
- Alcoholism
- Binge eating disorder
- and more...

(MBSR Standards of Practice, University of Massachusetts Medical School website, 2017)

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Personal Benefits of Meditation

Three Marks of Existence

- Impermanence
 - The only constant is change
- Suffering
 - First and second dart
- No self (egolessness)
 - Not so solid, not so separate

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Meditation in the Healthcare Setting

- Review article on mindfulness and meditation interventions among physicians, nurses, and psychologists
 - Overall results indicate improved well-being and ability to cope with stress among clinicians
 - Studies also evaluating patients of clinicians found benefits to patients personally and to the patient-clinician relationship
- Modified MBSR program in pre-med and med students
 - Reduced psychological distress (including depression) and state and trait anxiety
 - Increased empathy and spirituality

(Irving, Dobkin and Park, *Complement Ther Clin Pract.*, 2009; Shapiro, Schwartz and Bonner, *J Behav Med.*, 1998) 20

Teaching Self-Care to Mental Health Professionals

- Prospective, cohort-controlled study of a modified MBSR vs. two control courses among 54 graduate psychology students
- MBSR participants had
 - Decreased
 - perceived stress, negative affect, state and trait anxiety, and rumination (self-regulation)
 - Increased
 - positive affect and self-compassion
 - mindfulness
 - Note:
 - relationship between self-compassion and effectiveness in counseling
 - Short duration of practice needed to experience benefits

(Shapiro, Brown and Biegel, *Train Educ Prof Psychol.*, 2007) 21

Meditation for Those Who Work in Palliative Care Settings

- 27 publications included
- Among informal caregivers there were improvements in mood (depression and anxiety), stress, and self-efficacy at an average of 8 weeks following intervention initiation
- Among health professionals there were improvements in emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction at an average of 8 weeks following intervention initiation

(Dharmawardene et al., *BMJ Support Palliat Care*, 2016)

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Four Immeasurables

- Loving-kindness – wish for others’ happiness & recognizing no separation between you and others
- Compassion – feeling others’ pain in your own heart
- Sympathetic joy – feeling others’ happiness in your own heart
- Equanimity – “the mind of no preference”



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Meditation Benefits to Our Patients

What Meditation Can Teach Our Patients About How to Eat

- Synchronizing body and mind
- Revealing the true nature of our minds and bodies
- Development of non-judgmental curiosity and self-compassion
- Expanding and accommodating a range of physical and emotional states



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A Word of Caution in Using Meditation with Clients

- Meditation is not a panacea
- Meditation is not medication
- Meditation may not be for everyone

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Common Barriers to Meditating

- Not knowing where to begin
- Misconceptions about meditation
- No time (duh!)
- Perfectionism
- Lack of support



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If You Would Like To

- Practice
 - Find a technique that is at least 2500 years old
 - Find a trained MI
 - Pair with study
- Teach
 - Learn how
 - Have your own consistent personal practice

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Breath Awareness Meditation

- Shamatha = the practice of tranquility
- Simplicity, precision, gentleness
- 3 foundations of mindfulness
 - Body
 - Breath
 - Mind



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Let's Try It



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Questions?

Thank You!

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Open Heart Project Meditation Instructor Training Course

- September 26 – November 21, 2017
- Opening registration early to attendees of today's program
- Learn more:
<http://susanpiver.com/meditation-instructor-training/>
- Bonus download: free pdf of "5 mindfulness lessons every coach can use"

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Suggested Scientific Resources

- Sara Lazar, PhD: Publications. Harvard University website.
http://scholar.harvard.edu/sara_lazar/publications
- The Saron Lab. University of California, Davis website.
<http://saronlab.ucdavis.edu/shamatha-project.html>
- American Mindfulness Research Association website.
www.goAMRA.org

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Additional Resources to Explore

- Chödrön P. *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala; 2001.
- Hanson R, Mendius R. *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*. 1st ed. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications; 2009.
- Piver S. *Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation*. 1st ed. Boulder, CO: Shambhala; 2015.
- Insight. Insight Timer website. <https://insighttimer.com/>
- Open Heart Project. Susan Piver website. <http://susanpiver.com/open-heart-project/>

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Credit Claiming

You must complete a brief evaluation of the program in order to obtain your certificate. The evaluation will be available for 1 year; you do not have to complete it today.

Credit Claiming Instructions:

1. Go to www.CE.TodaysDietitian.com/Meditation OR Log on to www.CE.TodaysDietitian.com, go to "My Courses" and click on the webinar title.
2. Click "Take Course" on the webinar description page.
3. Select "Start/Resume Course" on the webinar description page. Complete and submit the Evaluation.
4. Download and print your certificate.

Please Note: If you access the Evaluation between 3-4 pm ET on 3/28, you may experience a slow connection due to a high volume of users.

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