



Anxiety and Insomnia In These Trying Times and How Meditation Can Help

With all of the stories in the news about healthcare, the economy, the government, the planet, and the leadership, we are bombarded with negativity about our current situation and more projected negativity into the future. While these things that are happening are real and true, how we take in and interpret these circumstances is a matter of choice. We can choose to allow this chaos to spoil our enjoyment of what we still do have, or we can choose to allow it to spin us into anxiety, disturbances in our sleep, and even depression. But there **are** things that we can all do to get through these trying times. The choice is always ours!

Having a regular meditation practice is a great first step that will trickle into every area of your life. Besides being the antidote to stress, meditation can affect your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. A regular practice is cumulative and can help you manage stress, reduce anxiety, improve your relationships, create inner peace, awaken your intuition, enhance your sleep patterns, reduce pain, lower blood pressure, help you become less judgmental, and connect to spirit more deeply. What happens in a meditation session is not as important as cultivating the discipline to meditate. The conscious sitting and being aware of what is going on in your mind, is in itself, stress relief. It is not stress relief when what is going on in your mind is concurrent with driving while drinking coffee and talking on your cell phone, or multi-tasking in general. Meditation is a discipline that will help you quiet that internal mental and emotional chatter that creates stress and thereby supports illness and dis-ease in the body-mind. With regular practice, you will find that you will automatically make better choices in your life that will contribute to good health and well-being. It will also become easier to make those choices not by feeling deprived, but by feeling good about taking care of yourSelf.

Anxiety is a choice as a stress response. Once you realize this, sometimes that, in and of itself, is enough to create a shift to enable you to make another choice as to how you will respond to a stressor.

Additionally, try limiting the amount of news that you watch about the current situations affecting us now. While it is important to be informed, be balanced in how much of this negativity you allow into your life. Take a “news fast” and try **not** watching the news immediately before bed. This is too stimulating and can contribute to insomnia and poor sleep in general.

Cultivate a sense of gratitude for what is right in your life and most importantly, be grateful for the relationships in your life that contribute to peace and happiness for you and your family. In hard times, there are always things for which we can be grateful. This sense of gratitude can trickle into other areas and we can see how blessed we really are compared to other parts of the world. And if for some reason you are unable to conjure up gratitude for something in your

life, then be grateful for your eyes, your liver or your beautiful heart that continues to beat unconditionally.

Choose natural remedies for anxiety and sleep disturbance like essential oils, melatonin, meditation, and yoga, just to name a few. These things assist us in achieving better balance which can help us manage the bigger picture of our lives.

Additional Tips to Alleviate Anxiety and Insomnia

- Try diffusing essential oils that are soothing and relaxing to the physiology, such as Peace and Calming, Lavender, Patchouli, and Chamomile. At bed-time, these can be diffused in your bedroom.
- Give yourself a foot massage or a full body massage (Abhyanga in Ayurveda) with massage oils that contain essential oils of Patchouli, Vetaver, Basil, Ylang- ylang, Lavender, or Lemon.
- Sip a soothing cup of hot tea before bed, such as Chamomile or herbal teas containing Nutmeg, Cardamom, and Coriander, or some warm milk with a pinch of these spices added to it.
- Eat a relatively light dinner by 7:30 PM (at least 3 hours before bed).
- Minimize exciting or invigorating activity, or vigorous or intense mental activity after 8:00 PM.
- Try to go to bed with lights out by 10:30 PM. Allow yourself to awaken naturally between 5 and 6:00 AM.
- Soak in a warm bath for 15-20 minutes with some essential oils added.
- Turn the lights low, light a candle and listen to soothing music before bed or any time you are feeling anxious. Breathe!!
- If you are feeling anxious at bed time, try journaling your mind chatter for a few minutes to “download” your thoughts or concerns so you do not need to ruminate about them when you close your eyes.
- Do not watch television or work in your bedroom. Keep all electronics out of the bedroom in general.
- Read inspirational or spiritual material before retiring rather than anything too stimulating.
- To help you fall asleep, close your eyes and simply “feel your body” as you breathe deeply. Notice any areas of tension and consciously decide to release that tension and relax those areas.
- Observe your slow, easy breathing until you fall asleep.
- Relax, Breathe, and Enjoy a peaceful heart and restful sleep. Life is too short not to enjoy every moment!

Dedicate yourself to learning more about what you can do to calm down, sleep better, and achieve more balance in your work and life as we move further into the season of manifestation of our goals and dreams.

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