



# OHM, Actually... You Do Have Time for Daily Meditation

Consistent meditation can help [decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety](#), [improve mood, strengthen memory and attention](#), [reduce chronic pain symptoms](#), and even [help you to recover quickly from illness](#). But living a busy, modern day life leaves little room for meditation. Or does it?

The [American Psychological Association](#) breaks mindfulness meditation into two main parts: **Attention** (focusing on the physical sensations of your body in the present moment) and **acceptance** (observing your thoughts and letting them go).

You can incorporate this practice throughout the day, any time you need to take a breather. If you're feeling stressed out at work, take a minute between reading emails to slow down, relax, and recharge. Notice the feeling of the chair beneath you, and the weight of your arms on the table. If worries about today's to-do list arise, accept these thoughts and re-focus on your physical body. Afterwards, you can return to your inbox feeling energized and invigorated.

Research shows that only [12 to 15 minutes of mindfulness meditation 3 to 4 times a week](#) is required to see profound improvement in your quality of life. Take the step towards bettering your health today and start living mindfully!

# Give the Gift of Health This Holiday Season!

It's that time of year again: snowfall, chilly weather, and ... sneezes. While the holiday season brings us inside to gather around the fireplace with family and friends, it means an increase in flu cases across the country. The most effective way to stay safe this flu season is getting a flu shot. This lowers the risk of infection and lessens the severity of your symptoms if you do become sick.

If you're not a fan of needles, there are [other ways](#) to receive your flu shot that work just as well. For those under the age of 65, you can opt for the use of a jet injector. This device uses a high-pressure, narrow stream of liquid that delivers the vaccine straight through your skin without ever piercing the top layer. There's also a nasal spray that is approved for those between the ages 2 and 49.

Nobody wants to spend their holiday months suffering from the flu. Make sure you're protecting yourself and your loved ones by receiving your flu shot. If your New Year's Resolution is about staying healthy (and even if it's not), a flu shot is the perfect way to start your year off right!

# Benefit Spotlight

## Paid Time Off

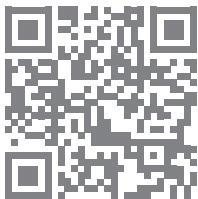
Taking breaks off work is vital to our health and wellbeing. But how do we know we're utilizing our Paid Time Off (PTO) to its fullest? There are a couple things to consider:

First: Timing. You might be tempted to take your PTO around federal holidays to lengthen your vacation time. But does a longer time off work mean more health benefits? [Research](#) shows that taking several short vacations throughout the year helps you maintain higher levels of health and wellness than if you took a single, long vacation.

Second: Activities. Unsurprisingly, [engaging in work-related activities during vacation does nothing to improve your health and wellness](#). So, turn off your email notifications, silence all incoming calls, and shut down your laptop. Focus entirely on your time off! Go on a trip or stay inside, it doesn't really matter where you spend your PTO. While travel may help you mentally distance from work, there's [not a huge benefit difference between either choice](#).

If planning a big trip sounds like too much work, research suggests that [doing nothing at all](#) is the best way to spend your time off. Lazing around keeps your mood high even after you return to work.

Your brain is like a battery, and it doesn't work if it's out of juice. Taking your PTO is an excellent way to relax, refresh, and recharge. Be proactive about your health by sprinkling some vacation days throughout the year. Your mind and body will thank you in the long run!



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