

## Meditation & ADHD

Researchers, Dr. Zylowska, et al from the University of California-Los Angeles conducted a feasibility study of an 8-week mindfulness training program for adults and adolescents with ADHD. Their report was published in The Journal of Attention Disorders (2008 May;11(6):737-46. Epub 2007 Nov 19).

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The researchers sought to inquire whether mindfulness meditation could improve attention, reduce stress, and improve mood. The researchers recruited 34 adults and 8 adolescents. Study participants were given a weekly training session. They were also required to practice daily starting with 5 minutes of meditation per day and gradually increasing to 15 minutes per day.

The majority of participants (after dropouts) reported improvements in self-reported ADHD symptoms. Independent tests on tasks measuring attention and cognitive inhibition also indicated improved symptom outcomes. Improvements in anxiety and depressive symptoms were also observed.

In yet another pilot study conducted by Sarina J. Grosswald, Ed.D., a George Washington University-trained cognitive learning specialist, a group of middle school students with ADHD were required to meditate twice a day in school. After three months, researchers found over 50 percent reduction in stress and anxiety and improvements in ADHD symptoms.

"The effect was much greater than we expected," said Sarina J. Grosswald, Ed.D., a George Washington University-trained cognitive learning specialist and lead researcher on the study. "The children also showed improvements in attention, working memory, organization, and behavior regulation."

Due to the neuroplasticity of the brain, better attention can be attained through meditation. Buddhist monks have been doing it for centuries. This seems to be true of ADHD persons as well. However, it is quite apparent that attention difficulties are just the tip of the ADHD iceberg. Other skills including organization, filtering out distractions, memory, time on-task, motor skills, visual tracking, etc, are typically diminished in ADHD persons. A complete program like Play Attention is required to teach these skills.

As for meditation, it is likely a good supplement to training in the aforementioned skill areas, but given the nature of the cited studies, a controlled clinical study is warranted.