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Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training

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Abstract

Although research has found that long-term mindfulness meditation practice promotes executive functioning and the ability to sustain attention, the effects of brief mindfulness meditation training have not been fully explored. We examined whether brief meditation training affects cognition and mood when compared to an active control group. After four sessions of either meditation training or listening to a recorded book, participants with no prior meditation experience were assessed with measures of mood, verbal fluency, visual coding, and working memory. Both interventions were effective at improving mood but only brief meditation training reduced fatigue, anxiety, and increased mindfulness. Moreover, brief mindfulness training significantly improved visuo-spatial processing, working memory, and executive functioning. Our findings suggest that 4 days of meditation training can enhance the ability to sustain attention; benefits that have previously been reported with long-term meditators.



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Keywords

Mindfulness; Meditation; Cognition; Working memory; Mood; Attention; Meta-awareness

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[†] This research was part of the doctoral dissertation of the first author under the supervision of the second author.

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