

REGULATORS

*Did you know 20 minutes of meditation equates to two hours sleep?
And that meditation actually stimulates creativity and enables you to listen properly?*



SOUNDS LIKE the perfect practice for hairdressers to us! We caught up with Matt Ringrose of Bondi Meditation to talk meditation for beginners – common myths and how hairdressers can benefit from the ancient tradition of self-regulation.

IN LAYMAN'S TERMS, WHAT ACTUALLY OCCURS IN THE BRAIN WHEN MEDITATING SUCCESSFULLY?

If you put brain sensors on someone's head before a meditation you'd see that their brain activity is all over the place – zigzagging around as the mind evaluates, plans and worries, trying to work everything out. During meditation this activity would be seen to calm down and smooth out. The activity at the front and back of the brain starts to mirror. The brain is now working as a whole. This allows for calmer, more organized, creative thinking rather than 'thinking in circles.'

WHAT ARE KEY HEALTH BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH MEDITATION?

How long have you got? There are thousands of peer-reviewed studies available online that show evidence for meditation helping with everything from improving mental health (in particular assisting in the treatment of depression, anxiety, insomnia and post traumatic stress) to halving the likelihood of heart disease and even reversing the ageing process! Basically once you free the body up from dealing with stress it has great capacities to heal itself.

FOR HAIRDRESSERS, ON THEIR FEET ALL DAY, CONSTANTLY CHATTING TO CLIENTS AND OFTEN PLAYING COUNSELLOR, WHY/HOW WOULD MEDITATION PROVE PARTICULARLY USEFUL?

Yes a hairdresser could draw on a lot of the benefits of meditation over a day's work. A meditation before their shift would help

them enter their day energized and calm. A 20 minute meditation gives the equivalent rest of over two hours sleep, so it would help maintain a stylist's energy levels as they stay on their feet and chat with clients for hours on end. Meditators naturally make good counselors as they are generally less stressed, more present and able to listen properly.

And of course, importantly for hairdressers, meditation boosts creativity by activating the front of the brain, bringing new ideas and inspiration.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE MEDITATE?

Different techniques recommend different amounts of time to meditate each day. Vedic Meditation, the technique which I teach, recommends sitting for twenty minutes twice a day.

CAN ANYONE LEARN TO MEDITATE, OR DOES IT TAKE A CERTAIN TYPE OF PERSON/MENTALITY?

Anyone can learn to meditate. I've lost track of the amount of times people have told me 'I'll be your greatest ever challenge. I know it works for some people but my mind is crazy – it never stops!' only for them to 'transcend' (go into a deep, restful state) in their first session. If you can think, you can meditate.

IN BEGINNERS' TERMS, CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW TO ENTER A STATE OF MEDITATION?

The following simple exercise can give you a taste of the meditation experience. If you feel drawn to meditation I do encourage you to find a teacher nearby to help explore the practice further.

- Sitting comfortably, close the eyes.
- Imagine the nature of an ocean. The waves on the surface of the ocean are like the thoughts on the surface of your mind: active and restless.
- As you go down deeper it becomes more and more still and calm. Connect with this peaceful, expansive, still place.

- From time to time thoughts will bubble up and lift you back onto the surface. This is fine. Do not resist the thoughts but each time, realise that you are back amongst the waves on the surface, reconnect with the calm still place deep in the ocean.
- Continue the practice for as long as it feels comfortable and enjoyable up to a maximum of 20 minutes twice a day.

ARE THERE DAY TO DAY PRACTICES/ FOODS/HABITS/LIFESTYLE CHOICES THAT AID THOSE LEARNING, TO MASTER MEDITATION MORE EFFECTIVELY?

I advise students not to drink caffeine or eat food straight before a meditation as the stimulation makes it harder to meditate, but other than that I encourage people to carry on with their lives as normal and see what happens. What is interesting is that people will tend to make changes to their own lives after they have been meditating for a while. Many find themselves making healthier choices instinctively and this, in turn, helps with their meditation.
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JESSICA SEPEL FOR NATURE'S WAY
QUALIFIED INTERNATIONAL NUTRITIONIST, popular health blogger and wellness coach, Jess Sepel has partnered with Nature's Way Whole Food Vitamins promoting supplements made by Mother Nature versus man – the ultimate choice for a healthier you. "I have reviewed countless vitamin brands and Nature's Way Whole Foods Vitamins is the only range I have found that gets 100 per cent of its vitamins from real, edible whole foods. These products are natural and better absorbed by the human body," says Jess.



This means several things for the savvy supplementer; you may not need the high doses usually required of synthetic vitamins and your body absorbs additional nutrients the way nature intended for better health.

On the topic of relaxation for body and mind, we quizzed Jess on the benefits of Nature's Way Whole Foods Magnesium Powder.

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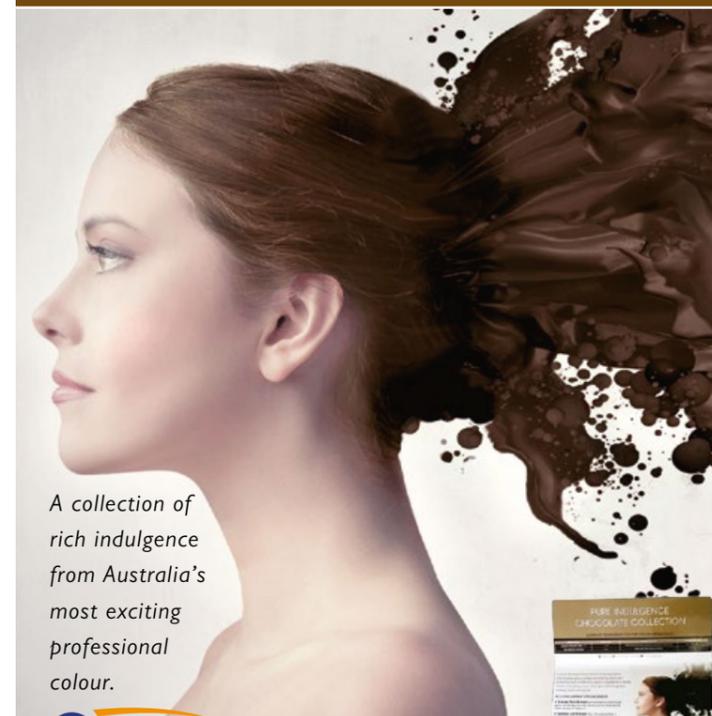
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