

Meditation isn't just about relaxing

Practice can benefit anyone who feels stressed, tired or overburdened

BY JULIE DEARDORFF, CHICAGO TRIBUNE DECEMBER 10, 2010



Marine veteran Anuradha Bhagwati is silhouetted during a Yoga for Vets NYC meditation and relaxation class in New York on December 6, 2010 in a file photo. Finding time to meditate can help reduce stress.

Photograph by: Jessica Rinaldi, Reuters

Meditation is a brain-boosting, [stress](#)-busting activity that is now embraced by everyone from the U.S. military to corporate executives.

And if you're living a busy, hectic life -- and can't fathom finding time to sit cross-legged in a quiet room -- you're an ideal candidate too.

"If you don't have 30 minutes to meditate, you probably need an hour," said Tamara Gerlach, a San Francisco-based meditation student and teacher.

"The people who race through their life are usually the ones who could use some focus and serenity."

Your mind is like a muscle you can train; meditation is the tool used to focus it or quiet it down. Every day thousands of thoughts zip through our heads, something Gerlach likens to a jar of dirty water: keep shaking up the jar -- or your head -- and it will remain clouded. But "if we set the jar down, letting the dirt particles settle to the bottom, it leaves clarity at the top," she said.

