

Psychotherapy Guidebook

# **TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION**

**Harold H. Bloomfield**

# **Transcendental Meditation**

**Harold H. Bloomfield**

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Psychotherapy Guidebook* edited by Richie Herink and Paul R. Herink

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Copyright © 2012 by Richie Herink and Paul Richard Herink

## Table of Contents

[DEFINITION](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[TECHNIQUE](#)

[APPLICATIONS](#)

# Transcendental Meditation

*Harold H. Bloomfield*

## DEFINITION

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a simple, natural, mental technique that produces deep rest on the level of the body and clarity on the level of the mind. The TM program is particularly suited to active people who want the benefit of medication without adopting a new life-style. It is neither a religion nor a philosophy and requires no lengthy course of study, intellectual capacity, or any special powers of concentration. TM is taught in every major American city at centers associated with the TM World Plan Executive Council, a nonprofit educational organization.

## HISTORY

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the exponent of TM in its modern form, first introduced it to the United States in 1959, and since then over a million people have begun the practice.

Until Maharishi began teaching the TM technique in the West, people were skeptical of claims that the practice of meditation could result in

increased energy, clarity of thinking, emotional stability, greater health, and decreased drug abuse. But since an article appeared in 1970 in *Science*, “Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation,” a convincing body of physiological, psychological, and sociological data from research centers around the world indicate that the TM program does indeed produce profoundly beneficial changes.

More than just a technique of relaxation, the TM program has as its goal systematically unfolding the state of enlightenment, full human potential. Historically, the hallmark of the TM program is the synthesis of age-old knowledge from the Indian Vedas — one of the oldest traditions of knowledge in the world — and modern scientific technology, in order to explore the furthest reaches of human consciousness.

## TECHNIQUE

TM spontaneously and effortlessly takes its practitioners beyond the familiar level of their wakeful experience to a state of restful alertness. The TM technique can be learned in a few hours and is then practiced for only fifteen to twenty minutes each morning and evening. The technique is a specific method of allowing the activity of the mind to settle down, while one sits comfortably with eyes closed. This mental process triggers a physiological response conducive to both deep rest and increased wakefulness.

TM students have a mantra (sound which has no meaning but whose effects are known) specifically chosen for them. Thinking the mantra is effortless, as it uses the natural tendency of the mind, and involves no concentration. Because learning to meditate does not necessitate cultivating a new skill, but instead simply involves allowing an innate ability of the nervous system to unfold, it requires no particular attitude, preparatory ritual, special setting, or unusual postures. Though the technique is usually practiced at home, it may be done in any place where a person can sit comfortably without being disturbed. Many busy individuals meditate on planes, trains, subways, buses, or in waiting rooms.

Though sense impressions, feelings, or thoughts may be present during TM, meditators report brief or sometimes extended periods of “pure awareness, transcending,” “being awake inside with nothing going on,” “not being asleep, but not being aware of anything in particular.” Our daily experience is made up of an unending cascade of thoughts, emotions, sensations, and perceptions. TM creates an opportunity for two brief daily periods of effortless disengagement from these continuous impressions. The result is a very efficient, self-generated “psychological housecleaning,” which leaves the individual feeling refreshed and renewed.

## **APPLICATIONS**

In the current edition of the *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, Dr. Louis J. West, chairman of the UCLA department of psychiatry, has suggested that TM may be the best of the nonprofessional psychotherapies. Since maladaptive anxiety is the common denominator of almost all mental illness and since TM has been shown to reduce anxiety, there has been increasing interest in the psychiatric community as to whether TM may be useful in the treatment of a wide range of diagnostic categories. Numerous reports indicate that clinicians are finding TM valuable as an adjunct to the treatment of anxiety neurosis, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, chronic low-grade depression, identity crisis, psychosomatic illness, and even some psychotic disturbances.

A major positive effect of TM seems to be the increase in self-reliance. Unlike medication or psychotherapy, TM is exclusively under the control of the patient. If he feels better, the result is due not to a pill or his relationship with a therapist but to a natural process under his own control. Drugs may help the patient feel less anxious but may make him feel listless and groggy, and may become addictive. TM has no adverse side effects and can promote what pills cannot — natural psychological growth.

Drug abuse also appears to improve with the TM program. A study of nearly two-thousand meditators showed a drastic reduction in their use of marijuana, narcotics, and other illicit drugs. And in a controlled study



published in January 1974 in the American Journal of Psychiatry, Mohammed Shafii, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Louisville Medical Center, showed that the longer one practices TM, the sharper the decline in marijuana use.

Many other studies confirm the greater psychological health of persons as a result of TM practice. For instance, a study by William Seeman, Sanford Nidich, and Thomas Banta at the University of Cincinnati found that a meditator's sense of innerdirectedness increases, as does his ability to express feelings in a spontaneous manner, his acceptance of aggression, and his capacity for intimate contact.

The most significant contribution that TM might make to the health field is in the area of primary prevention. To avoid illness altogether and to allow each individual to unfold his full potential has always been the highest goal for those concerned with human welfare. If systematic research continues to substantiate the preliminary findings, the TM program has a good chance of becoming a significant adjunct to psychotherapy and medical care.