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Meditation better than pain-killers

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

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10th April, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

Meditation can be better at relieving pain than the best pain-relieving drugs, according to a new report published in the Journal of Neuroscience. The study into the effects of the mind and pain was led by Dr Fadel Zeidan in the USA. The research looked at a technique called "focused attention," which is a form of meditation where people focus their thoughts only on their breathing. Dr Zeidan said: "This is the first study to show that only a little over an hour of meditation training can dramatically reduce both the experience of pain and pain-related brain activation". Zeidan added: "We found a big effect - about a 40 per cent reduction in pain intensity and a 57 per cent reduction in pain unpleasantness."

The study involved a group of volunteers who had never meditated before. They attended four 20-minute classes to learn about focused attention. Before and after the meditation training, the researchers examined the participants' brain activity using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). During the scans, a heat device was placed on their leg to create pain. The MRI scans showed that after the meditation training, pain felt by every volunteer decreased from between 11 to 93 per cent. Zeidan compared these results to medicines, saying: "Meditation produced a greater reduction in pain than even morphine or other pain-relieving drugs, which typically reduce pain by about 25 per cent."

WARM-UPS

1. MEDITATION: Walk around the class and talk to other students about meditation. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

meditation / relieving pain / neuroscience / attention / breathing / pain / unpleasant / volunteers / training / brain activity / heat / medicine / pain-relieving drugs

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. PAIN: What's bad about it what do you do about it? Complete this table and share what you wrote with your partner(s). Change and share again.

	What's bad about it?	What do you do about it?
toothache		
headache		
stomachache		
earache		
back pain		
heart pain		

4. RELIEF: Students A **strongly** believe scientists will find a way to make all pain disappear; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. PAIN RELIEF: Which are best for relieving pain? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- meditation
- sleep
- Western medicine
- alcohol
- massage
- Eastern medicine
- time
- over-the-counter drugs

6. MIND: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'mind'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A report says meditation relieves 100% of all pain. | T / F |
| b. The study looked at a kind of meditation called "technique focused". | T / F |
| c. The technique focuses people's attention on the source of the pain. | T / F |
| d. The study found a 40% reduction in pain. | T / F |
| e. A group of people who had meditated before took part in the study. | T / F |
| f. The meditators had their brains scanned before and after meditating. | T / F |
| g. Researchers administered pain to the study volunteers' legs. | T / F |
| h. The study said the pain-killer morphine reduced pain by 25%. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. relieving | a. joined |
| 2. dramatically | b. put |
| 3. training | c. strength |
| 4. intensity | d. normally |
| 5. reduction | e. considerably |
| 6. volunteers | f. getting rid of |
| 7. attended | g. related |
| 8. placed | h. teaching |
| 9. compared | i. cut |
| 10. typically | j. helpers |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. the best pain- | a. on their breathing |
| 2. published in the Journal | b. volunteer decreased |
| 3. people focus their thoughts only | c. pain unpleasantness |
| 4. a little over an hour of | d. 20-minute classes |
| 5. a 57 per cent reduction in | e. of Neuroscience |
| 6. a group of | f. brain activity |
| 7. They attended four | g. reduction in pain |
| 8. researchers examined the participants' | h. relieving drugs |
| 9. pain felt by every | i. volunteers |
| 10. Meditation produced a greater | j. meditation training |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Meditation can be (1) _____ at relieving pain than the best pain-relieving drugs, (2) _____ to a new report published in the Journal of Neuroscience. The study into the effects of the (3) _____ and pain was led by Dr Fadel Zeidan in the USA. The research looked at a (4) _____ called "focused attention," which is a form of meditation where people focus their thoughts only on their (5) _____. Dr Zeidan said: "This is the first study to show that only a little over an hour of meditation training can (6) _____ reduce both the experience of pain and pain-related brain activation". Zeidan added: "We found a big (7) _____ - about a 40 per cent reduction in pain intensity and a 57 per cent (8) _____ in pain unpleasantness."

dramatically
technique
according
breathing
reduction
better
effect
mind

The study involved a (9) _____ of volunteers who had never meditated before. They (10) _____ four 20-minute classes to learn about focused attention. Before and after the meditation training, the researchers (11) _____ the participants' brain activity using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). During the (12) _____, a heat device was placed on their leg to (13) _____ pain. The MRI scans showed that after the meditation training, pain felt by every volunteer (14) _____ from between 11 to 93 per cent. Zeidan compared these (15) _____ to medicines, saying: "Meditation produced a greater reduction in pain than even morphine or other pain-relieving drugs, which (16) _____ reduce pain by about 25 per cent."

decreased
scans
group
examined
typically
results
create
attended

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

Meditation _____ relieving pain than the best pain-relieving drugs, according to a new report published in the Journal of Neuroscience. The study _____ mind and pain was led by Dr Fadel Zeidan in the USA. The research _____ called “focused attention,” which is a form of meditation where people _____ only on their breathing. Dr Zeidan said: “This is the first study to show that only a _____ of meditation training can dramatically reduce both the experience of pain and pain-related brain activation”. Zeidan added: “_____ - about a 40 per cent reduction in pain intensity and a 57 per cent reduction in pain unpleasantness.”

The study _____ of volunteers who had never meditated before. They attended four 20-minute classes to _____ attention. Before and after the meditation training, the researchers examined the participants’ _____ MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). During the scans, a heat device was placed on their leg to create pain. The MRI _____ after the meditation training, pain felt by every volunteer decreased from between 11 to 93 per cent. Zeidan _____ to medicines, saying: “Meditation produced a greater reduction in pain than even morphine or other pain-relieving drugs, which _____ by about 25 per cent.”

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'pain' and 'relief'.

pain	relief
-------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• can• mind• form• show• related• 57	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• never• four• examined• heat• 11• 25
---	--

STUDENT MEDITATION SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

Write five GOOD questions about meditation in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

MEDITATION DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'meditation'?
- c) What are the benefits of meditation?
- d) What do you think of the research described in this article?
- e) Do you think meditation can be better than drugs at relieving pain?
- f) How powerful do you think our minds are?
- g) Would you like to do meditation training?
- h) What do you do to relieve pain?
- i) What's the most pain you've ever experienced?

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MEDITATION DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Would you like to volunteer for a study like this?
- c) Why do you think meditation works as a pain reliever?
- d) What kind of people meditate?
- e) What do you think happens in a meditation lesson?
- f) Do you trust the medicine you take to relieve pain?
- g) What do you think doctors would say about this research that claims meditation is better than pain killers?
- h) Should we learn meditation at school?
- i) What questions would you like to ask Dr Fadel Zeidan?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1104/110410-meditation.html>

Meditation can be better at (1) ____ pain than the best pain-relieving drugs, according to a new report published in the Journal of Neuroscience. The study into the effects of the (2) ____ and pain was led by Dr Fadel Zeidan in the USA. The research looked at a technique called “focused attention,” which is a (3) ____ of meditation where people focus their thoughts only on their breathing. Dr Zeidan said: “This is the first study to show that only a (4) ____ over an hour of meditation training can dramatically reduce both the experience of pain and pain- (5) ____ brain activation”. Zeidan added: “We found a big effect - about a 40 per cent reduction in pain (6) ____ and a 57 per cent reduction in pain unpleasantness.”

The study involved a group of volunteers who had never (7) ____ before. They attended four 20-minute classes to learn about focused attention. Before and after the meditation training, the researchers examined the (8) ____ brain activity using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). During the scans, a heat device was placed on their leg to create pain. The MRI (9) ____ showed that after the meditation training, pain felt by every volunteer decreased from between 11 to 93 per cent. Zeidan compared these results (10) ____ medicines, saying: “Meditation produced a greater reduction (11) ____ pain than even morphine or other pain-relieving drugs, which typically reduce pain (12) ____ about 25 per cent.”

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | (a) relieves | (b) relief | (c) relieved | (d) relieving |
| 2. | (a) thoughts | (b) mind | (c) skull | (d) cognition |
| 3. | (a) form | (b) firm | (c) farm | (d) frame |
| 4. | (a) few | (b) small | (c) little | (d) tiny |
| 5. | (a) relatives | (b) relations | (c) related | (d) relationship |
| 6. | (a) propensity | (b) intensity | (c) sensitive | (d) pensive |
| 7. | (a) meditated | (b) thought | (c) focused | (d) relieved |
| 8. | (a) participates | (b) participant’s | (c) participants | (d) participants’ |
| 9. | (a) pics | (b) scans | (c) copies | (d) PDFs |
| 10. | (a) at | (b) from | (c) by | (d) to |
| 11. | (a) at | (b) for | (c) in | (d) by |
| 12. | (a) by | (b) with | (c) than | (d) so |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about meditation and pain. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. MEDITATION: Make a poster about meditation. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. PAIN: Write a magazine article about meditation and pain. Include imaginary interviews with people who think meditation is best for relieving pain and people who think medicine is best.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a neuroscientist. Ask him/her three questions about meditation. Give him/her three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. T e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. relieving | a. getting rid of |
| 2. dramatically | b. considerably |
| 3. training | c. teaching |
| 4. intensity | d. strength |
| 5. reduction | e. cut |
| 6. volunteers | f. helpers |
| 7. attended | g. joined |
| 8. placed | h. put |
| 9. compared | i. related |
| 10. typically | j. normally |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. the best pain- | a. relieving drugs |
| 2. published in the Journal | b. of Neuroscience |
| 3. people focus their thoughts only | c. on their breathing |
| 4. a little over an hour of | d. meditation training |
| 5. a 57 per cent reduction in | e. pain unpleasantness |
| 6. a group of | f. volunteers |
| 7. They attended four | g. 20-minute classes |
| 8. researchers examined the participants' | h. brain activity |
| 9. pain felt by every | i. volunteer decreased |
| 10. Meditation produced a greater | j. reduction in pain |

GAP FILL:

Meditation better than pain-killers

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The study involved a (9) **group** of volunteers who had never meditated before. They (10) **attended** four 20-minute classes to learn about focused attention. Before and after the meditation training, the researchers (11) **examined** the participants' brain activity using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). During the (12) **scans**, a heat device was placed on their leg to (13) **create** pain. The MRI scans showed that after the meditation training, pain felt by every volunteer (14) **decreased** from between 11 to 93 per cent. Zeidan compared these (15) **results** to medicines, saying: "Meditation produced a greater reduction in pain than even morphine or other pain-relieving drugs, which (16) **typically** reduce pain by about 25 per cent."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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