



# The Science of Mindful Awareness\* and Health

Current research suggests that a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) intervention may be effective for reducing stress and increasing quality of life and self-compassion in health care professionals. <sup>5</sup>

Experienced meditators show increased brain thickness in areas important for attention and sensory processing and appear to have less age-related thinning of the prefrontal cortex. <sup>1</sup>

Studies have shown that meditators recover faster from exposure to stressful stimuli and do not show typical brain wave patterns in response to stressful stimuli. <sup>3</sup>



Mindful Awareness-based practices have produced beneficial effects for people suffering from anxiety, chronic pain, depression, cancer and stress-related disorders and has also been shown to be an effective tool for general wellness enhancement. <sup>2,4</sup>

Several studies indicate that meditation alters brain wave and brain activation patterns as measured by EEG and fMRI. <sup>2</sup>

1. Lazar, S.W. et al. Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness. *Neuroreport*. Vol 16(17), Nov. 2005, pp. 1893-97.  
 2. Davidson, R.J., et al. Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. Vol 65(4), Jul-Aug 2003, pp.564-570.  
 3. Goleman, D.J. & Schwartz, G.E. Meditation as an intervention in stress reactivity. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Vol 44(3), Jun 1976, pp.456-466.  
 4. Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). *Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: A New Approach to Preventing Relapse*. New York: Guilford.  
 5. Shapiro, S.L., Astin, J.A., Bishop, S. R., & Cordova M. Mindfulness-Based stress reduction for health care professionals: results from a randomized trial. *International Journal of Stress Management*. Vol 12(2), May 2005, pp. 164-176.

\*Mindful Awareness is the moment-by-moment process of actively and openly observing one's physical, mental & emotional experiences.