**TIP OF THE WEEK Decrease blood pressure and Protect Your Heart**

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A just-published study suggests the practice of meditation may bring cardiovascular and mental-health benefits.

The research, followed close to 300 students, half of whom practiced transcendental meditation for 20 minutes once or twice daily over three months. A subgroup of subjects in the meditation group who were at increased risk for hypertension significantly lowered their blood pressure and psychological distress, and also bolstered their coping ability.

The average reduction in blood pressure in this group -- a 6.3-mm Hg decrease in the top (systolic) number of a blood pressure reading and a 4-mm Hg decrease in the lower (diastolic) number -- was associated with a 52 percent reduction in the risk of developing hypertension in the future.

Mediators who were not at an increased risk for hypertension saw a reduction in psychological distress, depression, and anxiety as well as increased coping ability.

All the changes you make in your life begin in your head.

Meditation has the power to actually alter the way your mind works by strengthening the areas of your brain that regulate [attention](http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/12/03/meditation-improves-your-attention.aspx) and memory.

When you’re better able to focus and concentrate, you can perform routine tasks quickly and efficiently, leaving yourself with the time and energy you need to take on new goals and challenges.

Rather than doing the same things the same way, with the same mindset and the same disappointing results, meditation allows you to set the stage for the changes you want to make in your life.