

3HO FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

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Kirtan Kriya



Information on Kirtan Kriya

Kirtan Kriya is a type of meditation from the Kundalini yoga tradition, which has been practiced for thousands of years. This meditation is sometimes called a singing exercise, as it involves singing the sounds, Saa Taa Naa Maa along with repetitive finger movements, or mudras. This non-religious practice can be adapted to several lengths, but practicing it for just 12 minutes a day has been shown to reduce stress levels and increase activity in areas of the brain that are central to memory.

What do the words Kirtan Kriya mean?

In Sanskrit, a kirtan is a song, and kriya refers to a specific set of movements. In the Eastern tradition, kriyas are used to help bring the body, mind and emotions into balance to enable healing.

What do the sounds Saa, Taa, Naa, Maa mean?

The mantra that is repeated while practicing Kirtan Kriya is designed to be uplifting. The sounds come from the mantra 'Sat Nam', which means "my true essence".

Information gathered from The Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation



Information Kirtan Kriya (continued)

Is it essential to use these sounds during the meditation or can other sounds be used as a substitute?

From an Eastern perspective, it is believed that the placement of the tongue on the roof of the mouth while making these sounds stimulates 84 acupuncture points on the upper palate. This causes a beneficial bio-chemical transformation in the brain. In addition, Western research has revealed that utilizing the fingertip position in conjunction with the sounds enhances blood flow to particular areas in the motor-sensory part of the brain.

Clinical research has shown that practicing Kirtan Kriya for just 12 minutes a day can improve cognition and activate parts of the brain that are central to memory. Replacing the Kirtan Kriya sounds with other sounds, or replacing the meditation as a whole with other relaxing tasks, has not been shown to be effective.

The Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation believes that the various parts of Kirtan Kriya are each vital to the whole, and recommends practicing it in the traditional way to fully reap the benefits of the exercise. That said, other methods of reducing stress, like deep breathing, listening to music and other types of meditation may be beneficial to your health.

Information gathered from The Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation



INSTRUCTIONS

POSTURE:

Sit in Easy Pose with a straight spine, and a light Neck Lock. Wrists are on the knees, Start with the hands in Gyan Mudra.

EYES:

Your focus of concentration is the "L form," while your eyes are closed. With each syllable, imagine the sound flowing in through the top of your head and out the middle of your forehead (your third eye point), making an L-shape.

MANTRA AND MUDRA:

Chant Saa, Taa, Naa, Maa. With each sound, alternate through four mudras:

- On Saa, touch the index fingers of each hand to your thumbs
- On Taa, touch your middle fingers to your thumbs
- On Naa, touch your ring fingers to your thumbs
- On Maa, touch your little fingers to your thumbs

Each repetition of the mantra takes 3 to 4 seconds. In Kirtan Kriya you first chant out loud, then chant with a strong whisper, then mentally vibrate the mantra. To complete Kirtan Kriya you reverse the sequence, continuing silent chanting, then whispering, then chanting out loud.

For example, if you wish to practice for 12-minutes: For two minutes, sing in your normal voice. For the next two minutes, sing in a whisper. For the next four minutes, say the sound silently to yourself. Then reverse the order, whispering for two minutes, and then out loud for two minutes, for a total of 12-minutes.

TO END:

To come out of the exercise, inhale very deeply, stretch your hands above your head, and then bring them down slowly in a sweeping motion as you exhale.



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON KIRTAN KRIYA

PRACTICE THE 12-MINUTE YOGA MEDITATION EXERCISE

From the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation

Yoga and Medical Meditation as Alzheimer's Prevention Medicine

From the Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation

Meditation and Music Improve Memory and Cognitive Function in Adults with Subjective Cognitive Decline: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

From The Journal of Alzheimer's Disease

Yoga and Kirtan Kriya Meditation Bolster Brain Functioning

From Psychology Today

The Incredible Power of Kirtan Kriya: A Conversation on Brain Health and Longevity

From the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health

The Healing Power of Music, Meditation, and Yoga in Alzheimer's Patients

From Prevention Magazine

Improving Memory through Meditation?

From the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine

