

# BusinessWeek

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## Meditation May Boost College Students' Learning

**Study finds better concentration, lowered stress after TM sessions**

TUESDAY, Feb. 24 (HealthDay News) -- Meditation might help protect college students against stress and improve their ability to learn, suggests a study that examined the effects of Transcendental Meditation (TM) on stress reactivity and brain functioning.

Volunteers from U.S. colleges, mostly in the Washington, D.C., area, underwent physiological and psychological tests and were then randomly assigned to a TM or a control group.

Ten weeks later, the students in the TM group had higher scores on a standardized brain measurement scale and reported being less sleepy, not as jumpy and less irritable.

"The control group had lower Brain Integration Scale scores, indicating their brain functioning was more fragmented—which can lead to more scattered and disorganized thinking and planning," Fred Travis, director of the brain research center at the Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, and lead author of the study said in a university news release. "The controls also showed an increase in sympathetic reactivity and sleepiness, which can correspond to greater anxiety, worry and irritability."

However, meditation seemed to buffer students against the stresses of college life, the research team said.

During the study, students placed in the meditation group showed an increase in their Brain Integration Scale scores, "indicating greater breadth of planning, thinking and perception of the environment," Travis said. "The sympathetic reactivity and sleepiness decreased among the TM group, which corresponds to greater emotional balance and wakefulness."

"These statistically significant results among college students suggest that the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique could be of substantial value for anyone facing an intense and challenging learning/work environment," he said.

The study was published in the February 24th issue of the *International Journal of Psychophysiology*.