

Writer Judy Chapman

Meditation Goes Mainstream

From apps to dedicated studios and spas, opportunities to meditate are everywhere



“The quieter you become the more you can hear.” ~ Ram Dass

Who doesn't want to feel more calm, grounded, clear and present? With mental health one of our biggest wellness concerns, then little wonder this ancient modality is being embraced and reinterpreted by companies and communities around the globe. From cool meditation pods to machines and dedicated studios, meditation is helping humanity.

Meditation is no longer about sitting cross-legged in a robe in the Himalayas. It can be practised anywhere and everywhere, often for no cost at all.

Earlier this year for example, Oyler Wu Collaborative architect firm launched the state-of-the-art Meditation Pods equipped with a Headspace library for guided meditations. Sit back, slip on the headphones as you are guided through a personal meditation.

‘Stop the tweet, reconnect’ is the mantra at Sacred Space in New York, a meditation pod concept created by Shelley A. Lewis. These all-white healing spaces are where the city's bankers, art directors and advertising execs gravitate to reconnect with themselves.

Researchers at UCLA recently discovered

that 20 minutes of daily meditation over eight weeks resulted in increased telomeres (lifespan cells). Another study at UCLA showed that meditation improves sleep on par with sleeping pills but without the side effects. Meanwhile, new research at Harvard University indicates that regular meditation creates changes in our brain by affecting regions related to stress, intelligence and well-being.

Do we need any more convincing that meditation can help us regenerate?

At the Aman Spa at The Connaught Hotel in London, they have introduced complimentary lunchtime meditation to

help Londoners cope with stress and anxiety.

Over at the Four Seasons Sayan Resort in Bali they report a 42 per cent increase in interest from guests in meditation offerings over the last year.

“Meditation is big for us and a major part of our Yogic Programme series,” says Mark Sands, area spa director for Six Senses Hotels Resort and Spas, who has observed a 300 per cent increase in guests attending meditation sessions. Six Senses have gone as far as to brand their own style of meditation that consists of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and the elusive sixth sense.

Architecturally, designers are now considering meditation during the initial phases. A good example is Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat in Australia, where they recently unveiled three new meditation-centric suites, fitted with cushions, guided sessions, calming music and yoga mats.

MEDITATION TRENDS TO WATCH SOCIAL MEDITATION

Could meditation also be the new happy hour? Social meditation is on the rise with massive gatherings at Central Park and girlfriends meeting up after work for a vegan meal and evening group meditation session.

MACHINE-BASED MEDITATION

Jari Menari in Bali offers the revolutionary Hemi-Sync, ‘brain balancing’ system that prolongs the post massage glow with a 30-minute meditative sound experience. Guests recline with a headset while the audio-guidance process distills music to encourage synchronisation of brain wave activity, known as a whole state, believed

From cool pods to machines and dedicated studios, meditation is helping humanity

to enhance meditation and creativity and reduce stress.

Cornelia Spa at The Surrey Hotel offers the Somadome, a cocoon-shaped personal meditation pod that combines ancient healing with modern technology. The machine-based modality offers a choice of 20-minute restorative meditation sessions to relax, heal, focus, manifest or recharge. The frequencies of alpha, theta and beta help bring the mind to a more positive, calm state.

MEDITATION STUDIOS

MNDFL meditation is one of the first dedicated meditation studios that helps to rebalance the brain in just one hour. Another example is Unplug Meditation in Los Angeles bowing to the art of calm, offering 9am-to-9pm classes such as Sound Bath, Aromatherapy Meditation and Unplug Awakening to name a few.

MEDITATION CONCERTS & EVENTS

From singing bowls to sound baths, music and meditation go hand in hand and research indicates the benefits of sound therapy on the parasympathetic nervous system. Websites like Mindbodygreen.com provide trance-like meditation where a concert pianist improvises tranquil music

combined with peaceful imagery of nature in the background.

MEDITATION SPA TREATMENTS

The Mindful Massage, where massages are blended with mindfulness techniques and bodywork, is partly fueled by neuroscience that shows ongoing stress-reduction and therapies can actually re-wire people's brains so they are less anxious, happier, more focused and creative.

It's all in the Mind is a treatment offered at The Standard Miami where you are massaged into bliss as you listen to Holosync, a revolutionary system that induces brain wave patterns to induce deep meditation. The spa also holds regular workshops and new moon meditations.



THIS PAGE: Headspace's Meditation Pod. OPPOSITE PAGE: New York's Sacred Space offers all-white healing areas for clients to reconnect with themselves