

# Nurses' experiences, expectations, and preferences for mind-body practices to reduce stress.

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**ABSTRACT:BACKGROUND:** Most research on the impact of mind-body training does not ask about participants' baseline experience, expectations, or preferences for training. To better plan participant-centered mind-body intervention trials for nurses to reduce occupational stress, such descriptive information would be valuable. **METHODS:** We conducted an anonymous email survey between April and June, 2010 of North American nurses interested in mind-body training to reduce stress. The e-survey included: demographic characteristics, health conditions and stress levels; experiences with mind-body practices; expected health benefits; training preferences; and willingness to participate in future randomized controlled trials. **RESULTS:** Of the 342 respondents, 96% were women and 92% were Caucasian. Most (73%) reported one or more health conditions, notably anxiety (49%); back pain (41%); GI problems such as irritable bowel syndrome (34%); or depression (33%). Their median occupational stress level was 4 (0 = none; 5 = extreme stress). Nearly all (99%) reported already using one or more mind-body practices to reduce stress: intercessory prayer (86%), breath-focused meditation (49%), healing or therapeutic touch (39%), yoga/tai chi/qi gong (34%), or mindfulness-based meditation (18%). The greatest expected benefits were for greater spiritual well-being (56%); serenity, calm, or inner peace (54%); better mood (51%); more compassion (50%); or better sleep (42%). Most (65%) wanted additional training; convenience (74% essential or very important), was more important than the program's reputation (49%) or scientific evidence about effectiveness (32%) in program selection. Most (65%) were willing to participate in a randomized trial of mind-body training; among these, most were willing to collect salivary cortisol (60%), or serum biomarkers (53%) to assess the impact of training. **CONCLUSIONS:** Most nurses interested in mind-body training already engage in such practices. They have greater expectations about spiritual and emotional than physical benefits, but are willing to participate in studies and to collect biomarker data. Recruitment may depend more on convenience than a program's scientific basis or reputation. Knowledge of participants' baseline experiences, expectations, and preferences helps inform future training and research on mind-body approaches to reduce stress.

BMC Complement Altern Med. 2011 Apr 11;11:26. Kemper K, Bulla S, Krueger D, Ott MJ, McCool JA, Gardiner P. Center for Integrative Medicine, Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center; Winston-Salem, NC, USA. [kkemper@wfubmc.edu](mailto:kkemper@wfubmc.edu).

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