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ISSUE 15

“Unlike medications or techniques that dull or mask symptoms, TM produces a deep state of rest in the body by allowing the mind to experience its own silent inner nature. This experience is healing and rejuvenating.”

—Colonel Brian M. Rees, M.D

Watch the video ▶

Overcoming Post-Traumatic Stress

BY LINDA EGENES

Colonel Brian M. Rees, M.D., is a member of the Medical Corps, U.S. Army Reserve, and has over 37 years of commissioned military service. A graduate of the U.S. Army War College and veteran of five tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, he is a board-certified family physician who received his medical degree and master's degree in public health from Tulane University. Currently Colonel Rees is the Command Surgeon for the 63rd Regional Support Command, Moffett Field, California, and a physician at the Veterans Administration clinic in San Luis Obispo, California.

While we cannot yet say that the TM technique can help reduce the amount of medication one takes for PTSD, available data show that it reduces symptoms associated with PTSD.

Research shows that 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In this interview, Colonel Rees answers common questions he hears from military veterans wanting more information on PTSD.

Q: I came back from service in Afghanistan, and I've been diagnosed with PTSD. Can Transcendental Meditation help me?

COL Rees: While each case is unique to the individual, available evidence would indicate that the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique could help you. Controlled studies have shown improvement in combat veterans and in civilian refugees suffering from post-traumatic stress. Many other studies have

shown improvement in a host of symptoms related to PTSD.

Q: I'm on a lot of medication for PTSD. Can the Transcendental Meditation technique help me to reduce my meds?

COL Rees: While we cannot yet say that the TM technique can help reduce the amount of medication one

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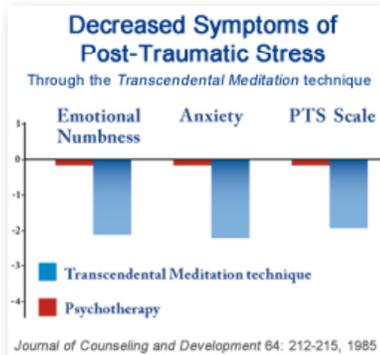
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takes for PTSD, available data show that it reduces symptoms associated with PTSD. We anticipate that as health grows and symptoms decrease, your need for medication should lessen.



This landmark study, conducted at a Denver Veterans Center, pioneered the investigation into the effects of the TM technique on veterans suffering from PTSD. The veterans were randomly assigned to TM or conventional counseling. After just three months of practice, the veterans experienced across-the-board reductions in emotional numbness, anxiety, and PTS symptoms.

U.S. Department of Defense Research Project

New research on active duty U.S. military personnel at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia, who suffered from the effects of post-traumatic stress, found the twice-daily practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique markedly reduced symptoms of PTSD. This research, published in the July 2013 issue of *Military Medicine*, is the third research study to show TM's significant benefits for those with PTSD.

More recent studies, published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, found that Congolese refugees suffering from post-traumatic stress had markedly reduced symptoms within ten days of learning TM, and were non-symptomatic within 30 days.

These new findings follow the recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Defense that it will provide a \$2.4 million grant to study the effect of the TM technique on PTSD among veterans at the San Diego VA Hospital.

Q: How does TM reduce stress? Can it really help with something as severe as PTSD? Is there any research?

COL Rees: TM is the best in the realm of relaxation and stress-busting techniques. It produces a deep, healing state of rest in the body and mind. There are literally hundreds of studies on TM from dozens of leading institutions published in peer-reviewed journals. We have evidence that TM gives a break to the part of the brain that had been "permanently switched-on" by traumatic events, thus enhancing sleep, decreasing hypervigilance, and helping restore healthy relationships.

Q: PTSD involves a huge range of symptoms. How can one technique help with so many physical, emotional, and psychological areas of dysfunction?

COL Rees: That's an excellent question. Unlike medications or techniques that dull or mask symptoms, TM produces a deep state of rest in the body by allowing the mind to experience its own silent inner nature. This experience is healing and rejuvenating. By promoting health at this fundamental level of life, all aspects of mind and body are enlivened and supported.

Q: How can I tell whether I have PTSD or not?

COL Rees: If you're a combat vet, your post-deployment health questionnaire should have identified whether you are suffering from PTSD or not. If you're not sure, there are simple questionnaires available from your military branch website or from the VA. If you have any question, you should seek care.

Q: Is it only people who have been to war that experience PTSD?

COL Reese: PTSD is not limited to combat. Any traumatic stressful event, such as an assault, natural disaster, or accident, can cause PTSD symptoms. Children who witness or are victims of violence can also experience PTSD. Reducing stress and trauma through TM can help people of any age to overcome PTSD.

The need for evidence-based, alternative approaches for reducing PTSD is enormous, says [Dr. Norman Rosenthal](#), clinical professor of psychiatry at [Georgetown University Medical School](#). Dr. Rosenthal co-authored a study on Afghanistan and Iraq veterans that found a 40 to 50 percent reduction in PTSD symptoms, including depression, anxiety, flashbacks, and insomnia; and reduced stress levels and quicker recovery from stress. Dr. Rosenthal also found decreased smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse.

"The Transcendentalists"

—Style.com

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TM is the best in the realm of relaxation and stress-busting techniques. It produces a deep healing state of rest in the body and mind. There are literally hundreds of studies on TM from dozens of leading institutions published in peer-reviewed journals.

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- [Learn about Operation Warrior Wellness sponsored by the David Lynch Foundation.](#) ▶

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written by a guest

Great to see someone of Col. Rees's experience speak about the benefits of Transcendental Meditation (TM) for PTSD. TM ought to be a part of every soldier's training prior to deployment.

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