

**“I felt like a new person.”**

## **The effects of mindfulness meditation on older adults with chronic pain: qualitative narrative analysis of diary entries**

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### **Abstract**

To identify the effects of mindfulness meditation on older adults with chronic low back pain (CLBP) we conducted a qualitative study based on grounded theory and used content analysis of diary entries from older adults who had participated in a clinical trial of an eight week mindfulness meditation program. Participants were 27 adults  $\geq 65$  years with CLBP of at least moderate severity and of at least three months duration. **We found several themes reflecting the beneficial effects of mindfulness meditation on pain, attention, sleep, and achieving well-being.** Various methods of pain reduction were used, including distraction, increased body awareness leading to behavior change, better pain coping, and direct pain reduction through meditation. Participants described improved attention skills. A number of participants reported improved sleep latency as well as quality of sleep. Participants described achieving well-being during and after a meditation session that had immediate effects on mood elevation but also long-term global effects on improved quality of life. **Several themes were identified related to pain reduction, improved attention, improved sleep, and achieving well-being resulting from mindfulness meditation that suggest it has promising potential as a non-pharmacologic treatment of chronic pain for older adults.**

### **Perspective**

**Community dwelling older adults with chronic low back pain experience numerous benefits from mindfulness meditation including less pain, improved attention, better sleep, more energy, enhanced well-being, and improved quality of life.** Additional research is needed to determine how mindfulness meditation works and how it might help with other chronic illnesses.

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