

Scientific Study Finds Wim Hof Method Outperforms Mindfulness Meditation for Stress, Energy and Mental Clarity

Large-scale study of 404 adults compares the Wim Hof Method with mindfulness meditation, finding stronger gains in stress resilience, energy and clarity.

AMSTERDAM, NOORD HOLLAND, NETHERLANDS, December 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new peer-reviewed study published in Scientific Reports (Nature Portfolio) finds that practicing the Wim Hof Method — which combines Wim Hof Breathing with controlled cold exposure — leads to stronger improvements in self-reported energy, mental clarity, and stress resilience when compared to mindfulness meditation, the most researched form of meditation.

The study, titled “A semi-randomised control trial assessing psychophysiological effects of breathwork and cold immersion”, followed 404 healthy adults over a 29-day intervention period. Participants were assigned either to practice the Wim Hof Method or to an active control group practicing guided mindfulness meditation.

Researchers assessed moment-to-moment psychological states, cognitive performance, and physiological measures throughout the study. Participants practicing the Wim Hof Method reported greater immediate improvements after daily practice in perceived energy, focus, and ability to handle stress compared with those practicing mindfulness meditation.

A notable finding was the cumulative effect observed in the Wim Hof Method group. While participants in the mindfulness meditation group experienced early psychological benefits that tended to level off over time, those practicing the Wim Hof Method reported benefits that increased progressively across the 29-day period, suggesting a dose-dependent response to consistent practice.

The Wim Hof Method intervention included guided Wim Hof Breathing exercises and gradual, controlled cold exposure, delivered both in person and remotely. The study found that outcomes were comparable across delivery formats, indicating that the observed effects were not dependent on in-person instruction alone.

While the strongest effects were observed in self-reported psychological measures, the researchers also explored executive functioning, sleep, and physiological outcomes. Changes in these areas were more nuanced, suggesting that subjective mental states such as energy, clarity,

and stress resilience may be particularly responsive to this type of intervention.

Beyond the findings themselves, the study stands out for its large scale. Earlier research on the Wim Hof Method was typically conducted in smaller, exploratory studies, which is common in emerging fields. This large-scale trial with over 400 participants confirms that the positive effects observed in earlier research are also present in a much larger population.

The authors note that the Wim Hof Method is not positioned as a medical treatment, but rather as a complementary practice that may support wellbeing and resilience when practiced responsibly.

Overall, the study adds to a growing body of scientific literature examining controlled physiological stress and its potential role in supporting adaptive psychological responses. By directly comparing the Wim Hof Method with mindfulness meditation in a large and well-monitored cohort, the research provides new insight into how different approaches to stress management may produce distinct psychological effects.

The full study is available open access in Scientific Reports (Nature Portfolio). The name of the study is; 'A semi-randomised control trial assessing psychophysiological effects of breathwork and cold immersion'.

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