

Plain Language Statement

Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences



Project: Tracking meditation: a longitudinal study.

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about. Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

The purpose of this research project is to understand what practitioners experience with continued meditation practice. Specifically, the research involves a longitudinal study which aims to track a cohort of meditation practitioners for two years, with the possibility that participation may be shorter or longer depending on available funding.

Practitioners will who have completed initial instruction and intend to continue practicing over time. They will be located in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom or the United States of America. The research will also investigate the cost effectiveness of meditation practice. This information will help us understand what changes are experienced by practitioners in different meditation traditions.

We are interested in your journeys over time – even if you stop meditating.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you will be invited to complete online surveys and weekly voice diaries in the study's app, Fabla. You will be asked to complete:

- 30–40-minute online surveys with questions on meditation history, health and wellbeing, and sociodemographics at the beginning of the study and then once a year.
- Monthly approximately 15-minute surveys asking about your meditation practice and experiences in the past month.
- Weekly brief voice diaries and a few short questions about the amount you practiced in the last week in Fabla app.

Full study participation will take approximately 8 hours over two years, with the possibility that the study runs for less or more time depending on available funding. We will notify you if this the case and you are free to leave the study anytime.

Regardless of whether you stop meditating, your responses are invaluable to us, and we encourage you to continue completing the surveys and voice diaries.

As compensation for your participation, you will be reimbursed USD \$5 for each monthly, and USD\$10 for each larger time point survey you complete, via gift cards in your equivalent currency, issued quarterly. Each weekly entry into the app will also be counted as an entry into draw for 20 gift cards valued USD 100 (or equivalent) drawn every 6 months. You may nominate compensation to be paid to a charitable organisation on your behalf. If the study ends earlier than planned, you will receive compensation for all surveys and entries you have completed up to that point.

What are the possible benefits?

This study will allow for a deeper understanding of what practitioners experience with continued meditation practice. It will inform future what range of experiences to expect at each step of their practice, making practice more informed, predictable, and hence safer and more ethical. An understanding of the time and resources needed to support different practices in different contexts is also expected to help increase the accessibility of meditation training and support.

What are the possible risks?

While the risks associated with completing these online surveys are minimal, there is a small risk that the content of the questions may lead to mild psychological discomfort or distress.

If you are distressed or negatively affected by any aspect of this study, you can contact the research team or local mental health support services in the following countries:

Australia:

Lifeline - 13 11 14

BeyondBlue - 1300 22 4636

Emergency Services: 000

Find a Mental Health Professional: (<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/find-a-mental-health-professional>)

New Zealand:

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Emergency Services: 111

Find a Mental Health Professional:

(<https://healthed.govt.nz/products/helplines-and-mental-health-services>)

United States:

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Hotline: 988

National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline: 1-800-950-6264 or text “HELPLINE” to 62640

Emergency Services: 911

Find a Mental Health Professional: (<https://findtreatment.gov/>)

United Kingdom:

Samaritans: 116 123

SANEline: 0300 304 7000

Emergency Services: 999

Find a Mental Health Professional: (<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>)

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw at any time. If you wish to withdraw from the study you can email our research team at Tracking-Meditation@unimelb.edu.au.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

We will announce the results via our mailing list (<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/wj9i>) and social media accounts (<https://psychologicalsciences.unimelb.edu.au/CSC#subscribe>).

A one-page plain language summary of the study along with the final report and any academic publications will be made available via the study website

(<https://psychologicalsciences.unimelb.edu.au/CSC/research/research-studies/tracking-meditation-a-longitudinal-study>). You will be notified by email once the results are available.

What will happen to information about me?

No identifying information will be published or available to other participants or to anyone outside the research team. We will handle all data in accordance with all relevant University of Melbourne data management policies and procedures and national regulations. Briefly, data will be retained in an encrypted database on a password-protected computer, to which only the research team will have access. We will analyse and use this data in reports and publications aimed at general public and

scientific audiences. All deidentified data will be retained indefinitely per terms of consent and may be used in future research. At the conclusion of the study, we will make the deidentified, cleaned, and summarised data set publicly available via the Open Science Framework.

Is there any potential conflict of interest?

This research will not financially benefit the research team, however we anticipate it may inform research directions, educational and practice offerings, and support evidence for funding requests or policy recommendations by the Contemplative Studies Centre at the University of Melbourne. This research may also inform future directions for professional development for the mindfulness and meditation teachers serving in the projects' Advisory Group.

Funding

This research is funded by Three Springs Foundation and a grant of 706266 USD from the Tiny Blue Dot foundation (<https://www.tinybluedotfoundation.org/>).

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact our research team (Email: Tracking-Meditation@unimelb.edu.au) or the researchers; Dr Julieta Galante (responsible researcher, email: julieta.galante@unimelb.edu.au), or Dr Lillian Ward (researcher; Email: lillian.ward@unimelb.edu.au).

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne HREC #30046. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.