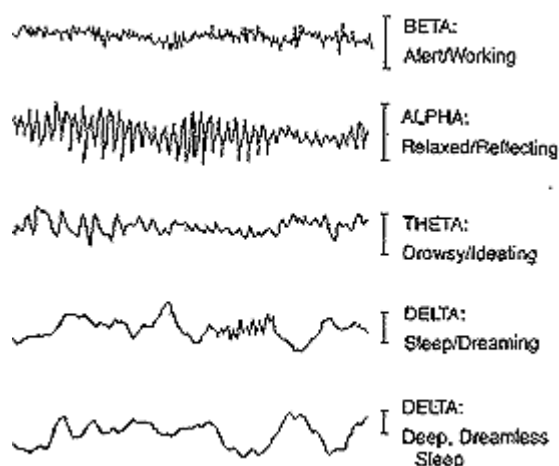


What does meditation do to your brain?

Now, that you know that meditation can improve brain performance, the ultimate question is how does it do that?

The answer is fairly straight forward and simple. **Meditation allows you to experience the benefits of different brain wave frequencies outside of their own daily cycle.**

Brain wave frequencies are **variations in electrical energy** your brain is producing. The rate of vibration, in this case cycles per second, represents different levels of brain energy **associated with different mental activities.** Here's a diagram to help explain it.



At the **Beta** level your brain is running at **13 – 40 cycles per second**. This is your everyday moment-to-moment thinking and processing activity. The higher the cycles per second the **more intense the mental processing and thought activity** your brain is engaged in.

At the **Alpha** level your brain is slowing down to **8 -13 cycles per second**. This is the stage of relaxation, thinking is slower after a busy day. In meditation it is the beginning of letting go i.e., letting thoughts pass in and pass out of your awareness without the need to analyze. For brain performance

it means being **less distracted, more focused, able to sustain attention and easier access memory.**

At the **Theta** level your brain is slower still at **4 – 7 cycles per second**. This is usually the state of physical drowsiness just before sleep, but in meditation this is a state of deeper relaxation yet still being aware. Some develop this state for deeper focused concentration or an opportunity for nonjudgmental self reflection. Brain performance here creates a **state of greater clarity of thought, insight, inventiveness and creativity.**

At the **Delta** level the brain waves are so slow at **.5 – 4 cycles per second** that it indicates physical sleep and varies as you go in and out of dreaming throughout the night. Dreams are thought to be one way the brain is processing the day's information but they also convey **answers or resolutions to greater problems** in the form of imagery. Many a scientist will attest to the value of dreams providing the answer or solution to a vexing problem.

There is also another brain wave pattern known as **Gamma** with **40 -100 cycles per second**. Less is understood about this level other than it is a state of very **high mental focus**. Tibetan monks with many years of meditative experience are able to readily generate gamma and it seems correlate to less of an ego self and more to **transcended, compassionate, loving emotional state.**

Meditation allows for different frequencies to dominate at any time they are needed. This is why some meditative practices have you focus on a candle or the pattern of your breathing. It's training your brain to move out of the beta frequency and to get to the frequency you need.

Some benefit from a ritualized or programmed meditation session and **carry the experience over into their daily activities.** While others are able to readily switch gears.

They will **activate and direct a brain frequency** for whatever brain skill is needed at the moment. **Either way the brain and brain performance appear to benefit from meditation.**

Next – how mediation affects the structure of your brain.