

TROUBLE MEDITATING? GOOGLE CEO SUNDAR PICHAI SHARES AN ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUE TO UNWIND

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The value of mediation is known to all of us in the fast-paced world we live in today. From Gurus to CEOs, everyone swears by meditation, but so many of us struggle to meditate. [Google CEO Sundar Pichai](#) shares an alternative way to relax which is just as effective. In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* last week, [Sundar Pichai](#) said he likes to decompress with the help of something called non-sleep deep rest, or NSDR. NSDR has been coined by Stanford neuroscience professor [Andrew Huberman](#), who has noted that it involves "self-inducing a state of calm and directing our focus to something."

On being asked how does he find the time to meditate, Pichai answered, "Meditation is something I see the value of, but I struggle to do that. Walking is very helpful to me. I find it much easier to think when I'm walking or pacing. Through the pandemic, sometimes it's been helpful to take my dog out for a walk, and I can relax by listening to podcasts. I found these podcasts which are non-sleep deep rest, or NSDRs. So while I find it difficult to meditate, I can go to YouTube, find an NSDR video. They're available in 10, 20 or 30 minutes, so I do that occasionally."

The famed neuroscience professor Huberman has said that NSDR can help people relax, fall asleep more easily, reduce stress and anxiety, ease pain, and even accelerate learning. It's commonly achieved through two NSDR protocols, namely yoga nidra and hypnosis. Yoga nidra involves lying flat on your back on the ground, typically with your eyes closed, and following guidance from an instructor, virtually or in-person, as they lead you through a number of activities, yoga nidra instructor Tracee Stanley has said.

Once your body begins to rest, it can cause your heart rate to slow down. Your brain may also switch from beta waves, which are associated with an active mind, to alpha waves, which correspond to a more relaxed brain state. Stanley says people doing yoga nidra may find themselves "hovering in a liminal space between being awake and falling asleep." Their bodies may physically fall asleep, yet they "maintain awareness both internally and simultaneously being aware of their surroundings." Additionally, Stanley has said that yoga nidra, is different from meditation because it is a form of "non-doing." "You're allowing inertia to let your body rest and be held by whatever it is that you are supported by," she said. "That means your body for once can actually release needing to do anything."

For hypnosis, Huberman describes it as "a state of calm and high focus." Hypnosis can be done with the help of a clinical hypnotist, or it can be self-induced using various hypnosis apps or videos. "You're eliminating the surround. So it's a state of high focus, which normally ... would be associated with a high degree of excitement or stress. But hypnosis is a unique state, because you have a high degree of focus, but you're very relaxed."

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