Laying on your back, mindful of your breathing, both hands rested on your belly, legs stretched out, eyes closed. Three bells ring, followed by the sound of a voice guiding a meditation process geared at reducing the everyday stress of school and life.

“Mindful Mondays” is a place for students, faculty and staff to learn basic mindfulness skills, manage stress, increase self-awareness and reduce negative emotions.

The weekly event is held from 11:15-11:45 a.m. at Pollak Library North Room 130.

Mindful Mondays was started a year ago by Natalie Tran, Ph.D., a secondary education professor, and William Breitbach, instruction and information services unit head of Pollak Library.

Mindfulness is the practice of bringing awareness to the body, said Tran.

When people typically think about mindfulness or meditation, they think about someone who sits isolated in a dark and quiet room, she added.

“That’s sort of a misconception,” Tran said. “There are other forms of mindful practice such as mindful walking, mindful eating (and) mindful talking.”

Mindfulness is the ability to be in the present moment, Tran said.

Mindful Mondays also focuses on total relaxation (deep relaxation), a form of mindful practice, another way to help the body heal after being exposed to toxins and consumptions.

Toxins and consumptions not only include physical consumptions like food, but physiological consumptions like the media, said Tran.

“Our body also needs that time, that space, to heal,” she said. “The practice of total relaxation allows to do that, to come and to take care of our body.”

Resting is a condition of healing and deep relaxation that allows people get the opportunity to heal their body, said Tran.

She added that stress accumulates in the body by the way people eat, drink and interact with each other and that not all consumptions are wholesome or healthy.

Meditation is meant to bring awareness to specific body parts.

“Once you are able to send the energy, positive energy to certain body parts,” Tran said. “One is not only bringing awareness but also cultivating a sense of compassion for themselves.”

Marian Sherman, analyst for the University Business Institute, has attended the events since its inception.

Though she had not taken the time to meditate prior to her experience, she is convinced there are many rewards.

“I think there are many benefits both physically and mentally with meditation,” said Sherman.
circumstances.

She noted that the last several years have probably been stressful for many due to the economy; generally, she said, she does not think life is more stressful than in the past.

Tran and Breitbach decided to start their own meditation session at Cal State Fullerton after meeting at a retreat on mindfulness for educators.

“Our hope is that if we can offer, even if its for a half an hour that sort of serenity and peacefulness,” Tran said. “That is a contribution that we can make on campus.”

Tran said they started out wanting to support and maintain a positive outlook because the campus is a stressful environment.

The duo would like to expand the meditation sessions to Wednesdays and Fridays.

“As long as we can cultivate a culture that has understanding and compassion beginning with ourselves, and then for other people I think our campus will be a much more healthier environment,” said Tran.

TAGS: Daily Titan, Erinn Grotefend, meditation, Natalie Tran, stress

About Erinn Grotefend
Erinn Grotefend is graduating from Cal State University Fullerton this spring. Serving as Detour Editor during the fall 2012, Erinn is ready to take on the position of News Editor this semester. She is majoring in Communications with an emphasis in Print Journalism and a minor in Radio, Television and Film. Erinn started her journalism career at Mount San Antonio College where she was News Editor for The Mountaineer. After graduating from CSUF, she plans to write for newspapers and magazines as well as go into television production. Her ultimate goal is to work for E! Entertainment.

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