

The Mindfulness Muscle: Map Your Path to Better Health and Well-Being

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Training Summary

Learn **HOW** and **WHY** you should train your mindfulness muscle! Gain a better understanding of the science and research supporting the physical and psychological benefits of mindfulness. Learn a variety of formal and informal mindfulness skills to help you manage stress and improve your overall well-being.


Training Objective

1. Better understand the concept of mindfulness, the benefits of a regular practice and the latest research
2. Learn about formal and informal mindfulness skills
3. Create a mindfulness plan

Group Activity: Mindfulness Practice 1

What is Mindfulness?

Mind Full, or Mindful?



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Mindfulness = Superpower?



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What is Mindfulness?

Paying **attention**
in a **particular way...**
on **purpose..**
in the **present moment..**
and **non-judgmentally.**

John Kabat Zinn

7 Attitudes of Mindfulness

- 1 Beginners Mind
- 2 Trust
- 3 Non-judging
- 4 Patience
- 5 Acceptance
- 6 Non-striving
- 7 Letting go

Source: Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat Zinn

**Group Activity:
How Mindful Are You?**

Science and Research in Mindfulness

- ❖ **NEUROPLASTICITY – RICK HANSON**
 - ❖ As Your Mind changes, your Brain changes
 - ❖ As your Brain Changes, your Mind changes
- ❖ The scientific power of meditation
 - ❖ Increased brain activity - amygdala
 - ❖ Changes to brain waves (alpha waves)
 - ❖ Increased grey matter
 - ❖ Cellular level – telomeres

Science and Research in Mindfulness

<p>Research focused on Physical Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heart Disease ❖ Type 2 Diabetes ❖ Cancer ❖ Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia ❖ HIV/AIDS 	<p>Research focused on Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Depression ❖ Anxiety ❖ Mood ❖ Stress Levels
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Key Outcomes

- ❖ Higher amounts of melatonin
- ❖ Greater relaxation response
- ❖ Stronger immune system

Carlson, L.E. (2012) Mindfulness-based interventions for physical conditions.
Goyal, M., Singh et al. (2014) Meditation programs for psychological well-being

Benefits of Practicing Mindfulness

<p>Physical Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves sleep ▪ Lowers blood pressure ▪ Reduces chronic pain ▪ Alleviates GI difficulties ▪ Reduces stress 	<p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves anxiety and depression symptoms ▪ Helps coping with chronic and life-threatening illnesses ▪ Helps dealing with conflict and anger
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<https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>

The Mindfulness and Stress Connection

- * Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)
 - * Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)
 - * Fight or Flight response
 - * Gas Pedal
 - * Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)
 - * Allows us to rest
 - * Break Pedal

Both systems need to work in balance with each other. Practicing mindfulness can stimulate the PNS, which helps to balance the SNS (cumulative effect).

Schttps://www.scientificamerican.com/video/how-does-meditation-change-the-brain2013-10-30/

Mindful Pauses

S.T.O.P for when you are stressing out

S = Stop what you are doing

T = Take a few deep breaths

O = Observe your experience just as it is (notice your thoughts vs. the facts, your emotions, your body)

P = Proceed with something that will support you in the moment (talk to a friend, go for a brief walk, have a cup of tea, rub your shoulders, do a brief meditation)

Reactivity Chain

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graph LR; Trigger[Trigger] --> Stress[Stress Reaction]; Stress --> Mind[Mind Storms]; Mind --> Feeling[Feeling Storms]; Feeling --> Behaviors[Reactive Harmful Behaviors]; Behaviors --> Consequences[Harmful Consequences]
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Ways to Practice Mindfulness

Formal Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Setting time aside to “go to the gym”▪ Exercising your mindfulness muscle through practices like meditation, tai chi, yoga, gratitude journal▪ The only thing you are doing	Informal Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Talking the stairs instead of the elevator▪ Doing our daily routines a little differently to be more mindful, i.e. mindful eating, mindful walking▪ How you engage with the present moment
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The Mindfulness Solution by Ronald D Siegel, PsyD

My Mindfulness Plan

How can a regular mindfulness practice benefit me?

What are two mindfulness practices I will start implementing?

1)

2)

What are some challenges I may face? How can I overcome them?

Wrap Up

- ✓ Mindfulness is a Superpower
- ✓ Mindfulness is supported by evidence based research
- ✓ Mindfulness helps you Mind Your Stress with S.T.O.P
- ✓ Mindfulness muscle can be practiced

The best time to practice mindfulness is when you don't have time for it.

Mindfulness Resources

Books:

- * Wherever You Go There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- * The Mindfulness Solutions by Ronald D. Siegel

Websites:

- * <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu>
- * <https://mindful.org>

Apps:

- * Insight Timer
- * Simple Habit

References

Peer-Reviewed Journals

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Ricard, M., Lutz, A., & Davidson, R. J. (2014). Mind of the meditator. *Scientific American*, 311(5), 38-45.

Books

Goleman, D., Davidson, R.J. (2017) *Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.

Cunha, R. (2015). *Mindfulness in Plain English* (20th ed.). Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2014). *Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Hachette Books.

Siegel, R. D. (2010). *The Mindfulness Solution: Everyday Practices for Everyday Problems*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

References

3) Expert Resources:

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Smith, K. (2016, January). COA 616: Mindfulness and Behavior Change. Lecture presented at Maryland University of Integrative Health in Maryland, Laurel.

4) Other Resources:

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