

Mindful Muscles Workbook: MODULE 4



MINDFUL
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Mindfulness

What is this module about?

In this module we focus on mindfulness – what mindfulness means and what it means to be mindful, and how you can use mindfulness to your benefit.

When you're exercising or training, it might feel like you're thinking about one hundred different things at once. You might be thinking how you've missed out or fallen behind in your training last week, how your squatting can be improved, or whether you'll manage to train as often you would have wanted if next week gets too busy at work. It's really easy to get caught up in all that thinking and this distracts you from focusing fully on your exercise or training. Over time, this can become stressful and prevent you from enjoying what you do. Mindfulness is about focusing on the *here and now*, focusing on what you're doing at that very moment, and allowing yourself to be aware and open to the feelings you experience in that moment.

What will you do?

*The first exercise we'll look at **Daily Mindfulness Practice**. As the name suggests, this exercise involves you engaging in mindfulness exercises. This will help you improve how you manage your thoughts and emotions when exercising or thinking about your exercise. You can use the resources provided below to get started with practicing mindfulness. You can also use the diary on the next page to keep a record of your mindfulness practice.*

Resources to help you with your daily mindfulness practices:

"3 minute breathing space" by Dr Peter Olusoga.

<https://mindfulmuscles.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/3-minute-breathing-space.mp3>

"5 minute body scan" by Dr Peter Olusoga.

<https://mindfulmuscles.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/5-minute-body-scan.mp3>

"10 minute awareness" by Dr Peter Olusoga.

<https://mindfulmuscles.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/10-minute-awareness.mp3>

Daily Mindfulness Practice Diary

Day	Daily practice	Observations and comments
<i>Monday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Tuesday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Thursday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Friday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Saturday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	
<i>Sunday</i> <i>Date:</i>	<i>Did you practice? (Yes/No)</i> <i>Did you use an audio guide? (Yes/No)</i>	

Positive Imagery

What is it? Positive Imagery is an exercise that allows you to visualize yourself in a positive, comfortable situation, where you can become relaxed and distance yourself from stressful thought patterns and realign yourself with the present (being in the moment).

As with any skill, positive imagery needs to be trained, and can be more effective the more it is practiced. Below is an exercise that will help you practice positive imagery.

How can I do this?

- Visualise a safe and relaxing place. It can be anywhere, like a beach or a retreat in the mountains. It can be a real place you've been to, somewhere you want to visit, or somewhere entirely imaginary.
- Visualise this place in as much detail as possible. Begin to use your senses.
 - What do you see, hear, taste, feel, or smell whilst you are there? Is it warm? Can you smell your favourite food? What would it be like to taste that? Are you in a soft bed, or sitting on a nice chair? What can you hear in the distance, or is it completely silent? Picture it in your mind as if you're actually there.
- Imagine yourself relaxing in this place.
- If you find it hard to relax, tell yourself, "I'm letting go of this tension".
- Remember what your senses are telling you about this place. Keep yourself here for now.
- You can leave whenever you're ready. And return whenever you like.



Diaphragmatic Breathing

What do I have to do? This exercise intends to help you practice diaphragmatic breathing. You may have had sessions in the gym where sometimes you need to catch your breath. Rather than trying to breath hard to push through a workout, diaphragmatic breathing (or “belly breathing”) replicates how you breath when we’re totally relaxed.

Why is this helpful? Breathing rapidly and harshly is common when you’re working out, but also how you breathe when stressed. As such, as exercisers, you might be used to this type of breathing. By practicing diaphragmatic breathing, you can help return your body and mind to a relaxed state when you begin to feel stressed or overwhelmed. Try to practice this as often as you can, as the more you engage in this exercise the more easily you might find you can use this breathing technique to relax.

How do I do it?

- It’s easier to practice belly breathing whilst sat or lying down, so get comfy!
- To make sure you’re doing this correctly, it can be helpful to place one hand on your chest, and the other on your abdomen.
- To begin, inhale normally, through the nose.
- As you inhale, think of sending the air to your belly, bypassing your chest. Feel your abdomen expand.
- Exhale through your mouth, making a shhhhhh sound. Feel your abdomen flatten. Draw out the exhalation before your next breath. Empty your belly of air.
- This breathing style should feel comfortable. There’s no need to pause or prolong the inhalation/exhalation longer than possible.
- Feel yourself relaxing as you breathe in and out.
- Continue breathing this way for at least 5 minutes. If you want to continue longer as you feel yourself relax, allow yourself to do this.



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