

## THE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS EXERCISE TO CHANGE THE BODY AND MIND

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### Abstract

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*Research indicates that mindfulness exercises affect physical and mental health, changes in behavior or attitude toward physical activity after doing mindfulness exercises, and mindfulness exercises' effectiveness in reducing stress. The review highlights that meditation and deep breathing can improve mental health. Daily mindfulness practice increases grey matter in the brain, particularly in attention and sensory processing areas. Mindfulness improves emotional regulation, diminishing negative feelings and increasing pleasant ones. Mindfulness also reduces stress and anxiety, improving well-being. Finally, mindfulness improves problem-solving by fostering creativity and minimizing cognitive biases. The observation method was used. The findings suggest that mindfulness exercises may improve mental and physical health, promoting well-being and reducing stress-related medical symptoms. Further study is required to fully understand the effectiveness of mindfulness exercise in improving physical and psychological health outcomes in chronically ill individuals.*

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**Keywords:** *Mindfulness exercise, Physical & Mental Health, Attitude, Stress, Well-being.*



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### Introduction:

T.W. Rhys Davids provided the first translation of the Buddhist technical term mindfulness in the year 1881. Since then, several authors, including Rhys Davids, have tried to define precisely what is intended by the term "mindfulness." These were constructed based on readings and interpretations of old Buddhist scriptures. At the beginning of the 1950s, several different definitions of mindfulness became more informed by the actual practice of meditation. Gethin, R.M. (2011) found that Nyanaponika's goal had a considerable impact on the purpose of mindfulness that was accepted by those who established MBSR and MBCT.

According to Greeson, J.M. (2009), Mindfulness meditation can reduce stress, improve mental and physical health, and increase positive emotions and quality of life. Positive effects of mindfulness practice have been shown in studies. Mind-body exercise, also known as mindful exercise, has grown in health clubs, fitness centers, and cardiovascular disease prevention and management programs since the early 1990s. It is characterized as physical exercise executed with a profound inwardly directed contemplative focus. It addresses a more intrapersonal quality due to the attention drawn to the self. Classic mindful practices such as yoga and Tai Chi are process-oriented and attentive to the present moment. Mindful exercise relies on self-monitoring of perceived effort, breathing, and non-judgmental self-awareness and is adaptable to various functional capacities. It can be easily customized for any age, level of fitness, body type, or chronic disease state with skillful instruction. There is a growing body of data in the field of complementary health practices suggesting that increasing one's level of mindfulness can lower stress levels and the severity of stress-related medical symptoms while also improving one's ability to experience happy emotions and overall quality of life. In addition, research is beginning to point to a connection between (a) how frequently people meditate, (b) how much more attentive they become as a result of their meditation, and (c) the beneficial consequences that individuals feel in terms of their mental and physical health. This concise and selective overview highlights some of the most current findings from scientific research that demonstrate how the practice of mindfulness meditation can affect a person's mind, brain, body, and behavior in ways that may benefit whole-person health. Physical and mental health issues are too common in our modern, high-stress environment. The practice of mindfulness meditation, which aims to reduce stress and improve overall health and wellness, has recently seen a surge in popularity. Research has shown that consistent practice of mindfulness exercises can lead to beneficial changes in attitude and increases in one's ability to regulate their emotions, as well as benefits for one's physical health. This study aims to conduct a literature review on the benefits of mindfulness exercises for one's mental and physical health and one's situation, stress levels, and overall well-being.

**Methodology:** This observational study examined the effects of mindfulness practices on physical and mental health. The observation method entails systematically observing without explicitly intervening or manipulating the studied variables.

**Objectives:**

- To examine the impact of mindfulness exercise on physical and Mental Health.

- To identify any changes in behavior or attitude towards physical activity after engaging in a mindfulness exercise.
- To assess the efficacy of mindfulness exercise in reducing stress and promoting well-being.

### **How Mindfulness Exercise Changes Your Mind**

Mindfulness techniques, like meditation and deep breathing, have been shown to change the mind in several good ways. One of the most common perks is that it makes your mind more transparent and easier to focus on. Many researchers have found that people who practice mindfulness daily have more grey matter in their brains, especially in parts of the brain that deal with attention and sensory processing. Mindfulness has also been linked to better control of emotions, reducing bad feelings and increasing positive ones. Research has also shown that mindfulness can improve well-being by making you less stressed and anxious. Lastly, mindfulness has been shown to help people solve problems better by encouraging creative thought and reducing the effect of cognitive biases. These results suggest that daily mindfulness exercises can lead to a wide range of good mental and emotional impacts.



*Picture 1. Practice of Mindfulness Meditation*

### **How Mindfulness Exercise Changes Your Body**

Mindfulness exercises affect the body and mental health. Blair Kennedy et al. (2015) studied that Mindfulness-based training for physical activity has beneficial psychological and physiological effects. Mindfulness reduces the stress hormone cortisol. This reduces inflammation, which can cause cardiovascular disease and autoimmune illnesses. Mindfulness-based interventions are more successful when focused on physical activity. Schneider, J et al., (2018). Mindfulness activities minimize blood pressure, chronic pain, and sleep quality. Mindfulness also boosts natural killer cell function, which fights infections and cancer. Finally, mindfulness increases cortical thickness in the brain's body awareness and interception regions.

These data suggest that mindfulness techniques can improve physical health. Mindfulness exercises have been shown to have various beneficial effects on the body, including stress reduction, immune system enhancement, improved muscle strength and flexibility, and improved sleep quality. Burke et al. (2010) found in a meta-analysis of 29 studies that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs significantly reduced participants' perceived stress levels.

Moreover, a study published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* found that regular mindfulness meditation increased breast cancer survivors' immune function, as measured by the activity of natural killer cells (Witek-Janusek et al., 2008). Moreover, mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to increase muscle strength and flexibility. Gardner-Nix et al. (2016) found that an eight-week mindfulness-based intervention significantly improved upper and lower body strength and flexibility. Lastly, mindfulness practices have been associated with enhanced sleep quality. In a randomized controlled trial, Black et al. (2015) found that Meditation-based sleep interventions significantly improved sleep quality in older individuals with sleep problems. These findings indicate that mindfulness exercises can benefit the body, promoting physical health and well-being.



Picture II Practice of Mindfulness physical exercise

### **Some Mindful Exercise Benefits your Physical and Mental Health:**

One's mental and physical health can be improved by practicing mindfulness in many ways. Here are other examples that are more applicable:

- 1. Body Scan Meditation:** During this exercise, you will lie down and concentrate on each part of your body, beginning with your toes and making your way up to your head. The idea is to become aware of any physical sensations, tension, or discomfort and to release them as you go along. Become aware of any physical feelings, stress, or pain.
- 2. Deep Breathing:** This exercise consists of taking long, steady breaths while concentrating on the feeling of air entering and exiting your body as you inhale and exhale. It is a fantastic method for lowering tension and anxiety and can be done anywhere.
- 3. Mindful Walking:** This is an exercise in which you walk slowly and methodically while concentrating on the sensation of your feet making contact with the ground, the movement of

your body, and the sights and sounds occurring around you. It is an excellent method for practicing mindfulness and getting some physical activity.

**4. Sending Kind and Compassionate Thoughts to Yourself and Others:** This form of meditation involves sending kind and compassionate thoughts to yourself and others. You begin by concentrating on someone you care about and giving them pleasant views. After that, you broaden the scope of your attention to encompass not only yourself but also acquaintances and even those with whom you have a contentious relationship.

**5. Gratitude Practise:** This activity entails setting aside a few minutes each day to think about the things in your life for which you are grateful. It is possible to have a thankfulness diary in which you write down things you are thankful for daily, or it is sufficient to think of three things you are grateful for simply. This practice has the potential to boost both your mood and your health in general.

In general, there is a wide variety of ways to practice mindfulness, and the most important thing is to choose the method that works best for you and make it a consistent part of your life.

#### **Benefits of Mindfulness Exercise –**

Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness linked to physical and mental wellness (Prazak, M.D., Critelli, J.W., Martin, L.A., Miranda, V.S., Purdum, M., & Powers, C. (2012). The physical health component consisted of heart rate variability, while the psychological health component consisted of flourishing, existential well-being, negative affect, and social well-being. People with high levels of mindfulness have been shown to have improved cardiovascular health and psychological wellness. The practice of mindfulness is a subset of meditation that focuses on cultivating awareness of the present moment and accepting one's thoughts and feelings without applying judgment. It has been demonstrated to help individuals better manage their stress while reducing anxiety and despair symptoms.

MBSR can help reduce anxiety and depression in people with GAD and MDD, improve attention and focus, and benefit the immune system. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness exercises can significantly positively affect physical and mental health, including lowering stress levels, enhancing attention and focus, and providing advantages to the immune system. Additionally, engaging in mindful exercise can help develop emotional control and increase one's level of self-awareness. In conclusion, practicing mindfulness through meditation or other activities is a powerful method for improving one's general health and lowering stress levels. The practice can increase attention and focus, reduce symptoms of

anxiety and depression, promote the immune system's health, and improve sleep quality. Individuals can experience the many benefits of the mindfulness exercise practice and enhance their overall health and well-being by adopting this practice into their daily routines.

### **Conclusion-**

As mindfulness exercises become more popular, they are beneficial for both physical and mental health. Mindfulness exercises, such as meditation and deep breathing, have been shown to have numerous positive effects on the mind, brain, body, and behavior, leading to improved overall well-being. In this literature review, we have examined the impact of mindfulness exercise on physical and mental health, identified changes in behavior or attitude towards physical activity after engaging in a mindfulness exercise, and assessed the efficacy of mindfulness exercise in reducing stress and promoting well-being. One of the most significant benefits of mindfulness exercise is its ability to reduce stress levels. Research suggests that mindfulness meditation can reduce the severity of stress-related medical symptoms, lower cortisol levels, and minimize blood pressure.

Furthermore, mindfulness exercises have been shown to improve sleep quality, boost natural killer cell function, and increase cortical thickness in the brain's body awareness and interception regions. These findings suggest that mindfulness exercise may be an effective tool for managing stress and promoting overall well-being. Mindfulness exercise positively affects physical health, such as improved immune function. These findings suggest that mindfulness exercise may be a valuable tool for improving physical health outcomes, particularly in individuals with chronic health conditions. Mindfulness exercise has also been shown to positively affect mental health outcomes, particularly in individuals with anxiety and depression. MBSR reduces anxiety and depression, improves attention, and benefits the immune system.

Additionally, participants with GAD and MDD experienced fewer signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression after participating in MBSR. These findings suggest that mindfulness exercise may be an effective tool for improving mental health outcomes, particularly in individuals with anxiety and depression. Finally, the literature suggests that mindfulness exercise can lead to changes in behavior or attitude towards physical activity. For example, individuals who engage in regular mindfulness meditation have been found to have greater self-awareness, a greater sense of internal motivation, and a more positive attitude toward physical activity. These findings suggest that mindfulness exercise may help promote physical activity and improve overall health outcomes.

In conclusion, the results of this literature review indicate that mindfulness exercise has numerous positive effects on physical and mental health outcomes. Mindfulness exercise has been shown to reduce stress levels, improve sleep quality, boost immune function, and improve mental health outcomes in individuals with anxiety and depression. Additionally, mindfulness exercise may lead to changes in behavior or attitude towards physical activity, potentially promoting greater engagement in physical activity and improving overall health outcomes. Future research should continue exploring mindfulness exercise's efficacy in improving physical and mental health outcomes, particularly in individuals with chronic health conditions.

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