

Meditation Is an Essential Component of Physical Fitness

Meditation is an incredible stress-reliever. It helps lower the odds that you will become anxious and depressed, and even people who don't meditate are aware of the mental benefits associated with meditation. Did you know that meditation should also be considered an essential component of any physical fitness practice?

It's true, meditating regularly and practicing mindfulness contribute to a healthy, strong body as well as a capable mind. Many doctors and health care professionals believe that mental stress is at the basis of a long list of chronic physical health problems. Mental stress and anxiety promote the release of cortisol and other hormones and chemicals which can harm your immune system.

When your natural immunity is strong and healthy, you don't become sick. When your immunity drops, as it does when you experience stress too frequently, you increase the odds that you will fall prey to infection, sickness, and disease of any kind. This means your physical health is at risk when stress is a regular part of your life. As mentioned earlier, meditation is a well-known stress-reliever, therefore promoting physical health.

Meditation Makes You Want to Workout

Meditation improves all aspects of your mind. Your mental functioning, cognition and memory benefit. Think about the last time you looked at your calendar and realized you had a workout session ahead of you. If you were stressed out, frustrated, depressed or otherwise in a negative mental state, you probably felt as though your planned exercise session was something you *"had to do"*.

You may have even skipped your workout entirely. Now think back to the last time you looked forward to your next workout. No doubt your mental state was healthy, you felt good about yourself and your life, and you couldn't wait to get to the gym.

Meditation makes you *"want to"* exercise, rather than dreading your next workout session. When you are happy to be exercising, rather than wishing you could avoid it, your performance and results both receive a boost.

Meditation Strengthens Your Parasympathetic Nervous System

If you are wondering what in the heck the parasympathetic nervous system is, it is more than just a tongue-twisting phrase. This term refers to the part of your nervous system that returns your body to a relaxed, calm, stress-free state. This usually occurs after a threat of danger or normal daily stress has been encountered. Meditation activates this process, meaning that your physical body can repair and rebuild itself effectively after exercise stresses your muscles.

Meditation Is Linked to Healthy Sleep Patterns

Ask any serious athlete and they will tell you that proper rest is extremely important to a healthy body. When you feel tired and sapped of energy during the day, your workout suffers.

You may also reach for unhealthy, sugar-filled energy drinks and sodas for a boost, and this can wreck your sleep habits. Meditation clears your mind, limits distractions and strips both your body and mind of stress, which naturally leads to better sleep patterns.

You Reach Physical Goals and Achievements Quicker

Meditation is a mental supercharger. It affects your mind in so many positive ways. One of the premier effects of meditation is its ability to give you a laser-targeted focus. This improves not only your physical performance but also your mental ability to focus on a short-term or long-term fitness goal. Meditation combined with visualization is a powerful technique that high achievers in many different sports and physical activities use routinely to surpass personal bests and reach their biggest fitness goals.