

## **Slow Down and Get Fitter Faster**

Getting healthy, eating clean, faster weight release, less stress. How do you transform your life from hellish to healthy? In a word – mindfulness, the most important tool in your life fitness bag.

It's the most popular trend in fitness, nutrition and wellness, but it's so much more than the woo woo flavor of the month. In our society, where much of our life is lived on autopilot, mindfulness is all about hitting the pause button and becoming fully present in the moment. The future doesn't exist, the past is gone. The only reality we have is right now.

So how does being mindful translate into wellness? Let's talk. If you've been working out for awhile (or if you've ever worked out!) your body knows how to do the exercises, but it's getting your brain in gear that takes your fitness to a whole new level. Being mindful helps you put your "mind into your muscle" – and that translates into significant gains.

Ever watched someone slogging away on a cardio machine at the health club – reading a magazine or watching TV? They show up day after day, week after week, month after month – and their body shape and weight never changes.

Mindful training is all about the mind/body connection. Athletes know this - they visualize the muscles working at the same time they are actually working them. They get their head into their workout and they get maximum results. The first step is to focus on the here and now – not gritting your teeth and imagining what you're going to do when your workout is over.

You need to be present in what you're doing. Get calm and quiet enough to pay attention to what's going on in your body and your brain. Take a couple of minutes to get centered and visualize what you want to accomplish before you begin. Practicing mindfulness while training means focusing on 5 key areas: your breath, your feelings, sensations, sounds and thoughts.

As you begin to move, notice your body – how do your muscles feel? What's happening with your breathing? Are you sweating? Is your heart beating faster? If you're just starting out, getting rid of distracting thoughts can be tricky. Acknowledge your worries about your job, your finances, and those 10 extra pounds and then let them go. Go back to your breathing and the movement – as many times as necessary. Eventually the rhythm and flow will become easier.

Eating intuitively can greatly impact your weight. Are you eating clean (as possible) and keeping your metabolism revved up by eating 5 to 6 small meals per day? Are you eating slowly and NEVER on the fly? When you eat slowly and with awareness you tend to eat less and make better choices.

Simply begin to notice how eating different foods makes you feel. Pay attention to how full you're getting so you don't overeat. Making food choices based on your inner awareness (how is this food I'm eating going to nourish my body? Will this food give me the energy to do what I need to do today?) and your knowledge of healthy eating will keep your wellness goals on track and assist your weight release efforts.

4 Tips for Eating Mindfully:

1. **Eat when you're hungry.** If only a specific flavor, texture or type of food can satisfy your desire to eat, you're probably having a craving. Take a minute to get centered before you decide to eat.
2. **Stop eating when you're full.** Create your own fullness scale (1 being very hungry, and 7 is very full). Learn to pay attention to your body's signals and stop eating when you're moderately full – about 5.5.
3. **Focus on each bite.** Pause with each bite to discern the different flavors and textures. This mindset will allow you to stop eating once you reach the bite that makes you feel full.
4. **Minimize distraction.** Turn off the TV, put down the magazine or book. Get out of the car! Give all your attention to your meal.