

The role of meditation on sports performance

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



First of all, most athletes would comprehend that being at the top of your game and having overwhelming performances doesn't only involve putting a lot of dedication and hours of practice. Athletes understand that a person's mentality throughout a game determines a player's good or bad performance. While having the physical stature during sport, a person's mentality throughout a game has an enormous effect. When athletes become more aware of their bodies, as mentioned by [mindbodygreen. com](http://mindbodygreen.com), we obtain and build resilience, which will be thoroughly explained through these following paragraphs. When building resilience, we are freely able to handle obstacles like stress, which causes an increase in performance levels.

Firstly, Meditation is commonly used for Stress Reduction. Stress is an aspect that occurs quite frequently within athletes such as Footballers, Basketball players and other athletes that engage in other coessential sports. And it continues to negatively affect athletes all around the world. There have been many studies conducted to understand correlations between stress and sports performance. It mainly occurs to athletes during a confused situation. For example, within the sport of Football, it possible to encounter a situation where most of the opposition decide to put pressure on you. Within that Situation, the defender being pressured could possibly be confused and therefore leads to stress. When stress occurs, the defender most likely does mistakes under pressure. Stress reduction is crucial for optimal performance. Working out or competing when under stress has been proven to negatively affect performance. Being relaxed increases the ability to remain calm under pressure and also improves alertness. Through consistently practicing meditation, you'll help your body learn how to relax in the most stressful

situations, building confidence and ultimately achieving a more positive frame of mind. Meditation can do away with it to some extent, by allowing and basically freeing the mind to focus on more important objectives. Furthermore, we also understand that there are many mindfulness meditation techniques that can be effective upon stress relief and relaxation. One effective mindfulness meditation technique that has been underlined by scientists as prescribed by [verywellmind. com](https://www.verywellmind.com), involves focusing upon sounds of the environment. As thoroughly reading this secondary source, I can summarize that people believe that quiet environment's tend to be more effective for meditating. Practicing mindful meditation would be useful when having environmental and nature based sounds.

Besides referring towards Stress Reduction, Athletes commonly meditate to have improved sleep patterns and speeding recovery time. Sleep is something considered as imperative and as something that is absolutely necessary for everybody. Athletes such as Usain Bolt, who was the first person to hold both the 100m and 200m world records, and the first man to win 6 gold medals in sprinting, describes that “ sleep is extremely important to me – I need to rest and recovery in order for the training I do to be absorbed in my body”. According to a study published by the journal of sleep, it mainly shows that athletes who do not obtain enough sleep will experience a number of side effects such as weight gain, anxiety/depression and etc. Athletes who commonly practices meditation can possibly help their body to recover quickly from racing, injury, training and etc. Physical Training Is good, it also causes a lot of stress towards a lot of people such as muscle fibre tears. Recovery time from many common sports injuries can

actually be reduced. In addition to this, meditation has a positive affect towards the immune system, which prevents illness. Preventing illness is also considered important towards many athletes as it can heavily affect training or performance in negative ways. As I understand, we as humans experience a daytime sleepiness which is commonly known to leave you feeling lousy and lazy and may provide a wide range of health warnings and may even decrease our productivity.

In reference towards sleep patterns, there was recent study conducted regarding this topic by a professor named Dr. Herbert Benson. This study had 49 aged men and other adults who had trouble sleeping. Half of the participants completed and conducted a mindfulness meditation program that taught them meditation and other exercises which were created in assisting their focus whereas the other half completed a sleep education class which basically taught them ways to improve their sleep habits. It then came towards a conclusion where both compared results. From this study recently conducted, those who conducted the mindfulness had less insomnia, fatigue and depression within the six sessions compared towards the other group.

Thirdly, Meditation mainly helps athletes to deal with fear. Fear is mainly something that everyone is unable to cope with, whether it involves someone speaking in public, or someone about to write an exam, or fear whilst playing in a football match. Fear is also commonly known to hijack our minds from the present moment, which can lead to so many errors in sports. According to huffingtonpost.com, Meditation has been known to help calm the fear in the centre of our brains also known as the amygdala. For

example, whilst interviewing a couple of people within the AOL (Art of living centre), I had asked several people about how fear impacted their sports performance. One of the candidates had mentioned that during a situation in Futsal, he mainly feared being humiliated by his own teammates and humiliated by his coaches, and afraid of making wrong decisions during a futsal game. And this therefore has a negative affect towards the mentality of the person. So, like previously mentioned before, meditation is known to help get rid of the fear, which basically helps athletes and teenagers to perform better during a sports game. As we all understand, Meditation allows you to recognize thoughts and feelings without having an emotional reaction towards them. Normally, people would focus on positive “vibe” or a calming scene within their minds. According to eocinstitute.org, Continuously practicing meditation helps you deal with fears and everyday problems through a part called the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex. As the phobic person enhances her ability to meditate and to gradually expose herself to the object of fear, it basically teaches her amygdala to respond only when important or needed. Besides referring towards normal irrational fears such as

Sports fear is also considered to be the single biggest variable that dictates the level of success an athlete will experience while competing, and this mainly occurs in athletics/teenagers. Some examples besides embarrassment include anxieties during performance, physical contact (pain), having an injury and etc. So, we truly understand that fear prevents excitement and confidence from developing, thereby not allowing athletes from a young age to achieve their full potential.

Additionally, Meditation makes us people more resilient. Being resilient refers to someone who is able to deal and recover quickly from difficult Situations, whether it means by losing a game, or having many bad performances or just having a thought regarding negative events that have occurred in the past. Everybody understands within the law of nature, that in order to succeed and in order to bounce back, we fail over and over again and that failure is the first step to success. Meditation is also used as a way to remove yourself from the obstacles or the negative thoughts that stop's you from achieving your ultimate career or goal. Normally, athletes who are resilient, do not let a game loss or a training injury/muscle soreness bring their spirits down. Resilience can be a confidence builder in sports. Athletes who have a negative attitude about their abilities do not contain confidence that is being recognized. In addition to this, bouncing back upon a dreadful or a subpar performance is important for athletes as it encourages athletes to review or to look back in developing a positive work ethic. Resiliency reminds you that there will be times where you would rather give up and quit, but if you continuously work hard and demonstrate a positive work a ethic, there would be more possibility of achieving a specific goal. In terms of a teenage life, resiliency can benefit a childs overall success in academics and life and allows teens to put the past behind them and have more focus towards the present and the future. To support the information presented above, there was a recent study conducted which highlighted the link between the mindfulness and resilience. This study had concluded that Mindful people can cope with difficult thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down.

Furthermore, in similarity to becoming resilient in sports, which is definitely important, Meditation also has an impact towards the sense of identity, self, and the body. Continuously practicing meditation can benefit and can help athletes to conquering blind spots which makes performance challenges seem worse than they are. By recognizing specific blind spots that commonly occur within a specific sport like Football or Hockey, you can identify and improve your physical/mental exercise and skills and etc. And there have been many people who are unable to identify their blind spots. Some examples include This is considered to be quite an important factor as helps to build your identity as an athlete and your self confidence according to headspace. com. In relation towards this, A meditator would also learn to boost up their awareness to every muscle allowing an athlete to pinpoint or to notify an injury earlier and to most importantly prevent further damage and improving the mind body connection, which allows the athlete to discover and use their maximum potential.

Also, with the constant practice of meditation that utilizes visualization, endurance can be greatly improved. And this relates towards sports that are more aerobic compared to anaerobic. Have you ever quit exercise or any workouts due to bad stamina? More oftenly or not, people who are just starting to start exercising by going to the gym or playing football get easily tired of their workout program and chooses to give up, especially if their hard commitment and effort doesn't provide them with quick results. Maybe during a long run, the most important aspect would be to keep moving forward. Some people do not realise that being tired from practicing physical exercise is part of an important process and that athletes would only

increase their stamina due to their decisions on exercising more. It is quite known, that an athlete who contains a visual representation of accomplishing or achieving a specific goal, combined with the practice of deep breathing can provide assistance towards the body, so that it is able to work harder for a long period of time.

Now, we all understand that endurance is an important factor in terms of sports. Even during my investigation and further primary research, endurance plays a key factor in sports such as Football. We understand that athletes tend to run for long periods of time mainly sprinting back and forth, to help defend and attack within a 90 minute game. Having a bad endurance, could heavily affect the performance, as we tend to tire out quickly and not having the ability to provide help and assistance for your own teammates, which mainly leads towards a bad mentality after the game. In addition to this, it also provides assistance in terms of preventing injuries during crucial sport games. As I understand this, Meditation provides assistance within injuries in two ways. The first way involves releasing endorphins into our system. In reference towards biology, endorphins mainly refer towards hormones that are responsible towards what we understand as a 'Runners high'. Runners and athletes who normally experience lack of rest are most likely dependent upon endorphins. Continuously practicing meditation such as mindfulness, would provide and give the body a proper rest. Furthermore, another way would be by decreasing the cholesterol production. Cholesterol as we may understand it refers towards another hormone which provides injuries whilst running constantly running. It mainly functions by weakening the bone density. Furthermore, within my extensive

research of cholesterol, it provides disadvantages such as stress, unimportant fat and etc. The continuous practice of meditation helps reduce cholesterol levels.

These days, you could think of meditation in vague terms, as normally just creating a goal within your mind and having thoughts regarding that. However, a good and positive mentality as people understand it refers towards the ability to block out everything else and to focus only on a goal or purpose as rephrased by many athletes and sportpsychologytoday. com.

Lastly, throughout regularly conducted mindfulness meditation, we receive a benefit called the ability of improve awareness. As regularly mentioned within previous paragraphs, a lot of people work extremely hard and throw a lot of commitment in training to have a good performance within a sport. In mention of beginner triathlete. com Researchers like Keith Kaufman, who is a research associate within a school called the Catholic University of America, mentions that mental strength has an enormous impact towards an athletes performance and during a situation in sports. As suggested by several website, wishing to improve in sports and gaining an edge requires us to find ways to improve our awareness abilities similarly like focus, attention, decision making. Practicing a variety of meditation techniques helps us humans in learning to identify and to forget about the negative thoughts, which basically allows us to become more aware of our surroundings and to obviously respond towards sport situations easily. Moreover, we are still confused as to how this applies towards teens? Self awareness' is an important quality for teens especially within the ages of 15-19. This phrase is

true, as self-awareness has an objective of helping other children overcome important issues that teens face throughout their everyday lives and can further affect them in school or elsewhere.

We understand through the paragraphs presented above, that meditation does have effects towards sport's performance through a variety of ways, however, we also know that there are famous athletes that do meditation. Only a small amount of research will actually turn up a number of famous athletes who have succeeded by way of meditation. Many if not most successful sports figures practice yoga these days, which is certainly a form of meditation. But others have credited the idea of clearing their minds and learning to focus more directly. According to sportpsychology today, We can summarize that several athletes like Lebron James, who remains at the peak of his sport which is basketball openly talks about practicing yoga, and always shows to be increasingly calm and has been known and spotted to be meditating in the past. He is a terrific example simply because of his capable ability to block out the noise coming from the crowd to mainly focus upon his objective. Also, Djokovic as we understand has been very open regarding the importance of meditative practices and traditions. Although being described as 'falling of the rail', and ultimately struggling and dealing with heavy injuries, he still remains to be one of the world's most overpowering athlete when healthy, and has particularly mentioned the changes he made towards his diet and mentality or mindset. People within this generation think of meditation as having a calming effect, which is not false. However, sometimes the specific benefits go missing within this phrase.