

## ***Mindfulness Basics for Athletes***

Mindfulness can give athletes an edge and help improve performance. Here are some easy ways to integrate mindfulness into athletics:

**Deep breathing:** Conscious breathing is the cornerstone of yoga and meditation. Breathing is also critical for supplying oxygen to working muscles. Teaching an athlete mindful breathing can be the difference between running out of energy or finishing strong.

**Feeling grounded:** Both yoga and seated meditation introduce the concept of feeling firm in our foundation, whether sitting or standing. This creates a sense of stability and strength. Bringing this into athletics, whether running, playing soccer, rowing, playing football or hockey, can give an athlete a strong sense of power and support.

**Creating focus in the midst of a challenge:** When we meditate, we work with the idea of focusing our energy despite distractions that try to challenge us. When we practice yoga, we use the drishti or focused gaze to stay centered. Training the mind to focus while in competition can keep an athlete connected to the body, which can prevent injury and ensure quality technical execution.

**Less attachment to results; greater emphasis on being present:** The pressure to win can get in the way of even the most seasoned athlete. Mindfulness helps us stay connected to the present, regardless of the final outcome of competition and in many cases, can make the difference between winning or falling short. Ask anyone that plays golf and they'll tell you; as soon as you start worrying about where the ball will go, it won't go where you want it.

**Mindfulness and athletics both support discipline:** Performing athletics of any kind requires a commitment to practicing regularly, eating well and studying your sport. A regular yoga or meditation practice or just integrating simple mindful techniques such as deep breathing or healthy eating into your day supports creating discipline around the body and the mind.

To get started with a mindfulness practice, visit [mindfulhub.com](http://mindfulhub.com).

*We wish you 20 minutes of mindfulness each day!*

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