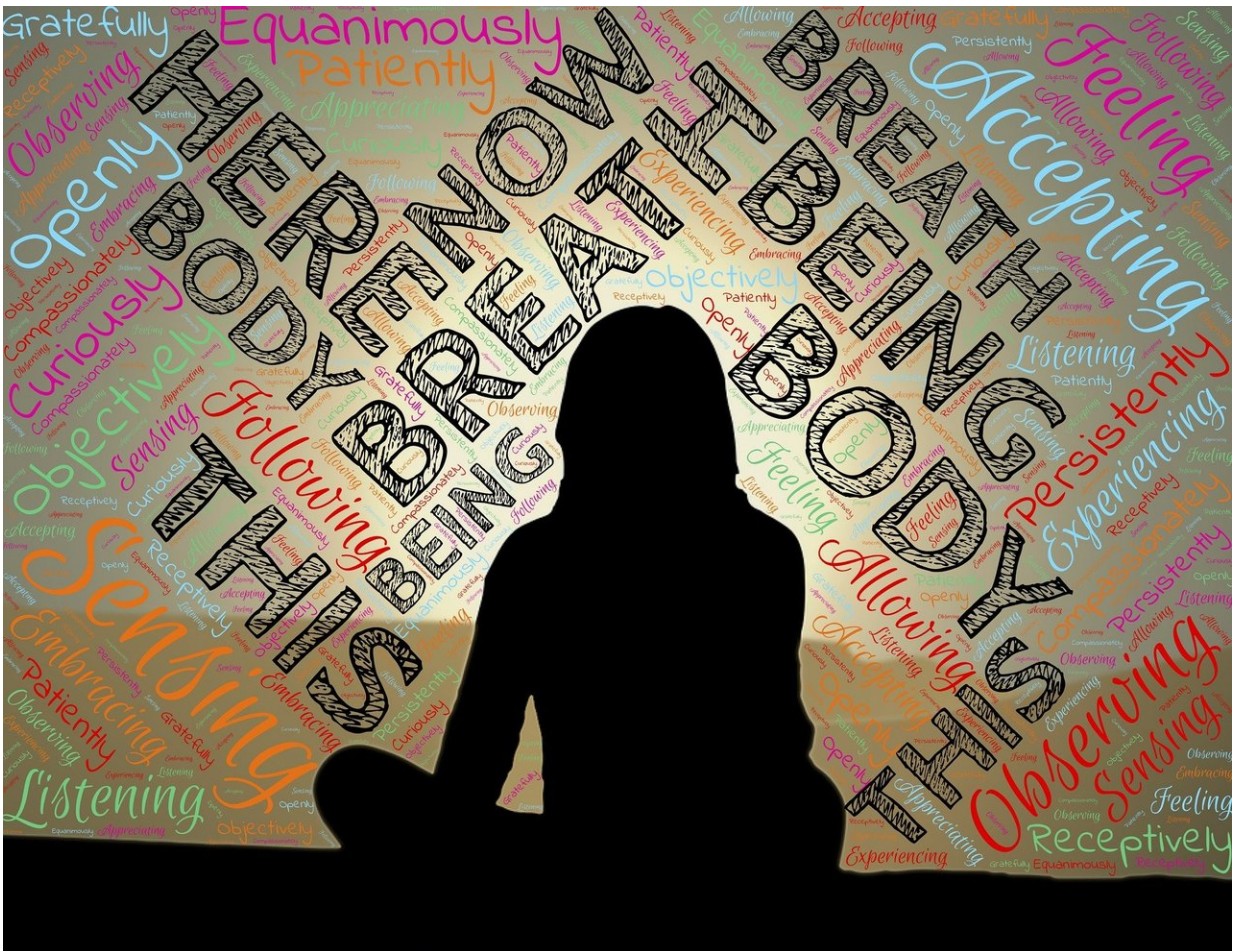


Combine mindfulness with exercise for mental health boost in 2024: Study

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For people looking to start 2024 with a new routine to feel fitter and

happier, a new study from the University of Bath suggests that combining mindfulness with exercise could be your key to success.

The study, published in the journal [*Mental Health and Physical Activity*](#), suggests that life changes which combine both physical activity and mindfulness are most effective at lifting mood and improving health and well-being.

Both [physical activity](#) and [mindfulness practice](#) have well-established psychological benefits. However, by reviewing existing research studies, this is one of the first to show how the positive effects can be increased when the two are combined.

Its findings suggest that mindfulness can help to unlock [exercise](#) by helping to motivate people to start in the first place, while overcoming minor pain, discomfort or feelings of failure when exercising gets hard.

Analysis of existing research found mindfulness to be highly effective at reducing worry, stress, anxiety, and helping people to live healthier, happier lives. The benefits for mental and [physical health](#) from mindfulness were found in people with and without health issues.

The study was conducted by psychologist Masha Remskar, an expert in [behavior change](#), mindfulness and exercise based at the University of Bath, with support from the Medito Foundation—a mindfulness non-profit with a mission to build a more mindful world.

Through its work, Medito has developed a [mindfulness meditation app](#)—a free alternative to paid-for services such as Headspace and Calm. It is collaborating with Bath to help improve people's mental well-being but also to help them get more active.

Based on the research findings, the team has created and released the

first of two mindfulness audio courses aiming to help people get into the habit of exercise. Later in 2024, they will release a second guide, focused on sustaining their exercise habit.

Masha Remskar from the University's Department of Health explained: "Starting 2024 with a resolution to exercise more can have really positive physical and mental health benefits. But we know that starting out can be tough and that it can also be hard to stick with it over time.

"Mindfulness is an approach that can help us 'train up' the psychological strengths we need to exercise and be more in tune with our bodies, as well as make exercising more interesting and help us recognize its benefits.

"This may be because becoming more mindful prompts us to think differently about our lifestyle, makes us more accepting and less judgmental of our own shortcomings, which can help to build healthy habits.

"There is a huge potential to use mindfulness to unlock the positive benefits exercise can bring."

Steven Yorke, co-founder at Medito added, "Mindfulness [mobile apps](#) are a great way to boost our mental well-being. Unfortunately, all too often companies put up paywalls, making the benefits of mindfulness inaccessible to some.

"At Medito, we believe that meditation and mindfulness should be available free of charge, to anyone, forever. This is why our mindfulness app, Medito, is and always will be free.

"This collaboration with the University of Bath has been a great way to expand the range of mindfulness meditations we can offer, and it feels

great to be at the cutting edge of mindfulness science while we do this."

Building on this work, the team is about to start conducting a larger trial to determine the effectiveness and optimal intervention moments for combining exercise and [mindfulness](#).

More information: Masha Remskar et al, Effects of combining physical activity with mindfulness on mental health and wellbeing: Systematic review of complex interventions, *Mental Health and Physical Activity* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.mhpa.2023.100575](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhpa.2023.100575)

Provided by University of Bath

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