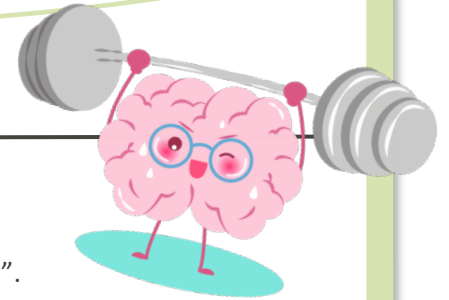


The Mind/Body Connection



Our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes can positively or negatively affect our biological functioning. At the same time, what we do with our physical body (what we eat, how much we exercise, even our posture) can impact our mental state (either positively or negatively). This connection is referred to as “the Mind/Body Connection”.

The Mind-Body Connection can help us learn to recognize when we are experiencing undue stress and teach us methods of reducing stress, thus decreasing the risk of stress-related health issues. Emotions like anger, fear, guilt, anxiety, sadness, resentment, jealousy, depression, and stress can manifest within the body and contribute to imbalance and disease. For example, you are likely already familiar with the way that fear can contribute to digestive upset or how tension can lead to headaches.

Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally. It’s about knowing what is on your mind. It is a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. Often, we experience injuries or falls when we are “not paying attention” to where we are walking or to the job we are doing. For instance, I once shut my head in my overhead SUV door because I was busy thinking about something else. Clearly, if we are able to practice mindfulness in our actions, we will be better able to avoid injuries from many accidents. What does practicing mindfulness in our daily actions look like?

Pick an activity you do on a daily basis which requires absolutely no concentration (brushing teeth, washing dishes, making coffee, other ideas) and actually pay attention the next time you perform those duties. Even talking out loud or to yourself, outlining the steps you are taking throughout. These types of practices can help us to increase our mindfulness during every day activities.

A wonderful way to increase mindfulness is through participating in a yoga-type class. In yoga, the instructor may have you hold a pose for several breaths, and ask you to tighten certain muscle groups, while feeling the stretch in other areas, all the while, maintaining awareness of your breath. If a yoga (or similar class) is available in your area, consider giving the class a try and see if you are able to increase your mindfulness over several weeks of practice.

While working out, ask your trainer to talk about the muscles you are working during each movement. Paying attention to how your body feels as it performs various stretches and movements helps you get the most out of each movement by breaking down the poses from the ground up (gripping with your toes, putting your weight into your heels, spreading your fingers wide, turning your elbows in). The more your trainer asks you to concentrate on the appropriate muscles and talks about how they should be feeling during the exercise, the more you get out of it.



To locate FREE local senior fitness classes in your area, please visit:

<https://franchise.live2bhealthy.com/class-schedule/>

Enter your zip code to find locations near you.