

MINDFiT

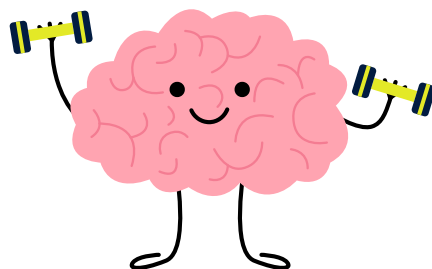
MENTAL WELL-BEING
TOOLKIT FOR SPORTS

Welcome to the MINDFIT toolkit, a resource designed to strengthen mental and emotional well-being in sports environments. At MINDFIT, we believe that mental health is just as fundamental as physical fitness to achieve peak performance and fully enjoy sports.

This toolkit gathers practical activities and tools based on modern psychology, mindfulness, and personal development techniques, aimed at athletes, coaches, and teams. Our goal is to foster a healthy environment where each person can grow, set healthy boundaries, manage stress, communicate assertively, and build positive relationships within the team.

Through these workshops, we facilitate the development of essential skills to face sports and personal challenges, promoting resilience, motivation, and mental balance. MINDFIT is committed to a holistic approach that strengthens not only the body but also the mind, to build stronger, more aware, and happier athletes.

We invite you to explore and apply the activities in this toolkit, creating safe and positive spaces for all team members.



MINDFUL BREATHING

Introduce basic mindful breathing techniques to improve focus and reduce stress.

Instructions

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight and feet flat on the ground.
2. Practice this breathing pattern:
 - Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
 - Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
 - Exhale gently through your mouth for 6 seconds.
3. Repeat this cycle for 5-7 minutes, focusing on the breath and returning your attention if your mind wanders.
4. Optionally, close your eyes and simply listen to your natural breath for 2-3 minutes without changing it.

Relaxing music for practice:



SETTING BOUNDARIES IN SPORTS

Help athletes recognize and express personal boundaries to support mental well-being and prevent burnout in training and team environments.

Instructions

1. Explain that boundaries are the limits we set to protect our well-being. In sports, they can help avoid overload, improve respect, and reduce stress.

2. Draw Your Circle (10 min):

- Draw a large circle on paper.
- Inside: write behaviors/situations you're comfortable with in your sport (e.g. positive coaching, time to rest).
- Outside: write what you don't accept (e.g. constant comparison, excessive pressure).

3. Sports Roleplay (7 min):

In pairs, practice saying a boundary assertively:

- “I need some time to recover today.”
- “Let's talk about this tomorrow—I'm mentally tired now.”

4. Group Reflection (5 min):

Discuss: What was hard about setting a boundary?
 How can teams support each other's boundaries?

BUILDING POSITIVE TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

Strengthen team relationships through open communication, shared values, and mutual support, fostering a positive and inclusive team culture.

Instructions

1. Quick Icebreaker – “One Word”:

Each team member says one word that describes what they value most in a team (e.g. respect, trust, support).

Write them on a board or flipchart.

2. Team Connection Map:

- Each person draws their name in the center of a page.
- Around it, they write teammates’ names and one positive quality or shared strength they associate with them.
- In small groups, share a few examples out loud.

3. Group Reflection Questions:

Facilitator guides a short group talk:

- What helps you feel supported by your teammates?
- How do we show respect and inclusion during practice?
- What could we improve to be a more connected team?

Inspiring video



CONFLICT RESOLUTION CHALLENGE: "TEAM REPAIR MISSIONS"

Work and communication skills by resolving realistic team conflicts in a creative, problem-solving format.

Instructions

🧩 How It Works:

1. Give each group a Conflict Scenario Card with a short sports-related situation.

3. Team Brainstorm

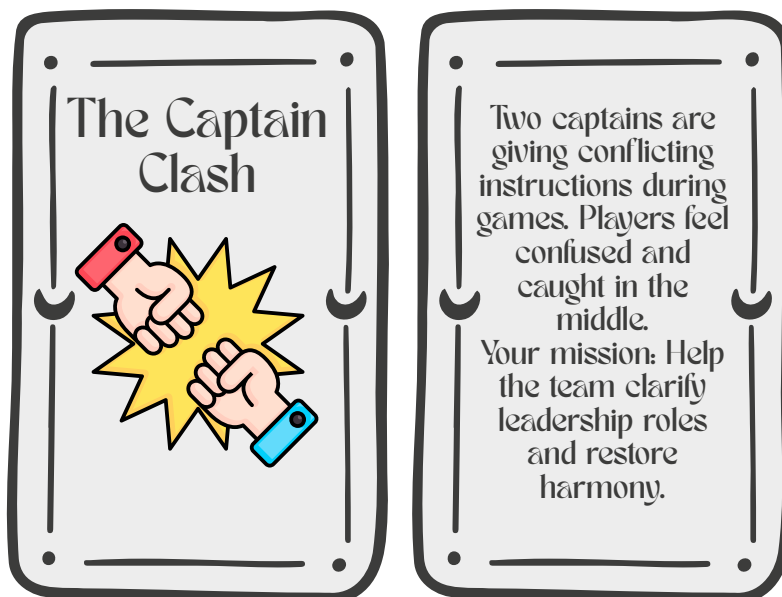
Each group must:

- Identify the core problem.
- Discuss how each person might feel.
- Agree on 2-3 steps to help resolve the issue using tools.

4. Present the Repair Plan

5. Wrap-Up Reflection

Example:



COMMUNICATION CIRCUIT (4 STATIONS)

To help participants practice assertive communication by expressing their needs, setting boundaries, and responding respectfully—skills that strengthen team dynamics, reduce misunderstandings, and promote mutual respect in sports environments.

Instructions

🧩 Station 1 – “Speak Up Drill”

Scenario: You’re not getting enough rest between training sessions and it’s affecting your performance.

✅ Goal: Practice saying what you need using “I” statements.

🤝 Station 2 – “Disagree with Respect”

Scenario: A teammate suggests a tactic you think won’t work.

✅ Goal: Express disagreement respectfully without offending.

🕒 Station 3 – “Boundary Set-Up”

Scenario: Your coach often messages you late at night.

✅ Goal: Set a polite boundary.

🧠 Station 4 – “Listen & Reflect”

Scenario: A teammate is frustrated and vents to you.

✅ Goal: Practice active listening and reflecting what they said.



THE IMPORTANCE OF
COMMUNICATION AS A COACH

SCAN ME



FUEL FOR FOCUS: NUTRITION & MENTAL HEALTH

Understand how nutrition influences mental well-being and performance, and build simple strategies to improve daily habits as a team.

Instructions

1. Ask participants to answer True or False (individually or in teams). Then reveal and explain the correct answers.
2. In groups, participants create a “Nutrition Game Plan” for their team with 3 parts:
 1. Pre-training snack idea
 2. Hydration habit
 3. Mood-friendly daily food
3. Each group presents their plan in 2 minutes.
4. Wrap-up reflection



MINI-QUIZ

1. *Skipping breakfast can increase irritability and reduce concentration.*
2. *Consuming a lot of sugary foods gives sustained mental energy during sports.*
3. *Drinking enough water is important for maintaining focus and preventing fatigue.*
4. *Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and nuts support brain health and mood regulation.*
5. *Processed and fast foods have no impact on mental well-being.*
6. *Protein helps stabilize blood sugar, which supports steady energy and mood.*
7. *Caffeine always improves mental performance without any drawbacks.*
8. *Eating a balanced diet with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can reduce anxiety symptoms.*
9. *Hydration affects physical performance but has little to no effect on cognitive function.*
10. *A diet low in vitamins and minerals can contribute to feelings of depression.*
11. *Eating late at night before sleep has no effect on mental health or recovery.*
12. *Probiotics and gut health are linked to mental well-being through the gut-brain axis.*
13. *Iron deficiency can cause fatigue and affect cognitive abilities.*
14. *Healthy fats, such as those from avocado and olive oil, are important for brain function.*
15. *Mental well-being is only influenced by psychological factors, not nutrition.*

VISION IN MOTION: SMART GOALS & MENTAL IMAGERY

Support participants in setting clear, motivating goals and using visualization techniques to enhance focus, confidence, and performance.

Instructions

Phase 1 – SMART Goal-Setting

Distribute the SMART Goal Template and guide participants to set a personal sports-related goal.

Phase 2 – Visualization Drill

Lead a short guided visualization exercise.

Script excerpt (spoken slowly or via audio):

“Close your eyes. Picture yourself preparing for your next competition... feel your breath, your focus. Now imagine performing at your best. Visualize every detail – movement, emotion, success.”

Then ask:

- What did you notice?
- How did it feel to mentally rehearse success?

Phase 3 – Pair & Share

Participants share with a partner:

- Their SMART goal
- One image they created during visualization
- One challenge they foresee – and how visualization can help overcome it

DAILY RHYTHM MAP: BUILDING RESILIENT ROUTINES

Help participants identify current habits and intentionally design healthy daily routines that support mental resilience, focus, and emotional stability.

Instructions

🧩 Part 1 – My Current Rhythm

Participants fill out a Daily Rhythm Map:

A circular or horizontal 24-hour clock where they mark how they currently spend their day (sleep, training, meals, phone use, study, rest, etc.).

🔍 Ask:

- When do you feel most focused?
- What drains your energy?
- Are you getting enough sleep/recovery?

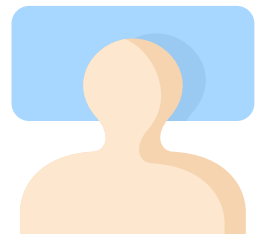
👉 Part 2 – My Ideal Mental Wellness Day

Now, give participants a blank version and ask them to design a routine that includes:

- ✓ Movement
 - ✓ Mindful breaks
 - ✓ Regular meals
 - ✓ Sleep hygiene
- 📌 Encourage realistic changes, not perfection.

🎯 Part 3 – Choose 1 Habit to Start

Each participant selects one small change to implement this week.



EMOTIONAL TOOLBOX: COPING WITH UNPLEASANT EMOTIONS

Learn quick strategies to manage emotions like anxiety, anger, or frustration in sports and daily life.

Instructions

Step 1 – What Helps Me?

Participants list or draw 3 things that help them calm down when they feel overwhelmed (e.g., breathing, music, running, talking).

Step 2 – Try 3 Coping Tools

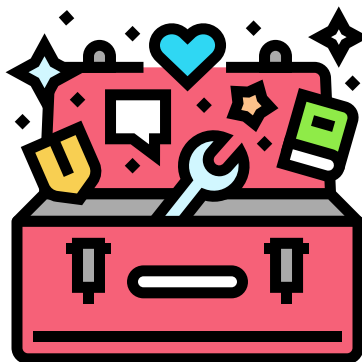
Practice together:

1. Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)
2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
3. Reframing thoughts (“I can’t do it” → “I’m still learning”)

Step 3 – Coping Card

Each person writes:

- 1 tough emotion they face
- 1 helpful strategy
- 1 reminder (e.g., “Pause. Breathe. Reset.”)



MENTAL REHEARSAL: SEE IT TO BE IT

Use visual imagery to improve confidence, reduce performance anxiety, and mentally prepare for challenges.

Instructions

🎯 Step 1 – Set the Scene

Participants choose a specific moment they want to visualize (e.g., a key match, routine, or challenging situation).

👁️ Step 2 – Guided Visualization

Read or play a short guided script:

"Close your eyes. Imagine walking into your performance space. Feel the floor, your body's posture. Now picture yourself executing each move with control and confidence. Hear the sounds, feel the energy, stay focused..."

Encourage using all five senses.

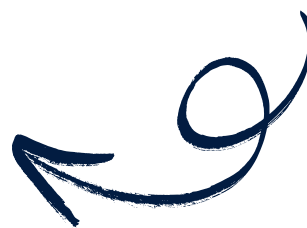
✍️ Step 3 – Quick Reflection

Ask participants:

- What did you see or feel?
- How did your body react?
- Would you use this before your next performance?



MINUTE GUIDED VISUALIZATION
FOR ATHLETES



CONFIDENCE BOOST DRILLSEE

Help participants identify personal strengths and practice self-talk strategies that build self-confidence and self-esteem in sports settings.

Instructions

 Step 1 – “My Strengths List”

Each participant writes down:

- 3 personal qualities (e.g., determined, kind, focused)
- 2 achievements in sports, no matter how small (e.g., “I kept going after a bad start”)

 Step 2 – “Power Phrases”

Introduce the idea of positive inner dialogue. Share examples:

- “I am ready.”
- “I trust myself.”
- “I learn and grow every day.”

Now, each participant creates their own Power Phrase, writes it on a card, and repeats it to themselves (or to a peer).

 Step 3 – Team Confidence Circle

In a circle or pairs, each person says something positive about a teammate – a quality or effort they appreciate. Examples: “You never give up” / “You bring great energy to the team”

BOUNCE BACK PLAN

Help participants reflect on failure as part of growth and develop tools to build resilience in sports and life.

Instructions

★ Step 1 – “Failure Happens”

Facilitator briefly shares this idea:

“All athletes fail – what matters is what we do next. Resilience means bouncing back, not never falling.”

Ask:

- When was a time you failed or struggled in sports?

🔄 Step 2 – “What Did I Learn?”

Each participant writes:

- A past challenge or failure
- What they felt
- What they learned
- What they’d do differently now

Optional: Share in pairs or small groups.

🔧 Step 3 – Build a “Bounce Back Plan”

On a card or worksheet, participants complete:

1. When I face a setback, I will...
2. → Take 3 deep breaths / Talk to someone / Rest & try again
3. A reminder I can tell myself:
4. → “This is part of the process.” / “I’m learning.”
5. One strength I will use:
6. → Patience / Courage / Persistence

STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Teach participants simple, effective techniques to recognize and manage stress in sports and everyday life.

Instructions

Step 1 - Recognize Stress Signs

Brief group discussion or brainstorm

Step 2 - Practice 3 Stress-Relief Techniques

Try each technique together:

1. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Tense then relax different muscle groups, moving head to toes.

2. 4-7-8 Breathing

- Inhale 4 seconds, hold 7 seconds, exhale 8 seconds.

3. Mindful Body Scan

- Slowly notice sensations from head to toe without judgment.

Step 3 - Personal Stress Plan

GUIDED PROGRESSIVE
MUSCLE RELAXATION



RECOGNIZING AND OVERCOMING MENTAL TRAPS (CBT)

Help participants identify common mental traps (cognitive distortions) and practice challenging negative thoughts using basic CBT techniques.

Instructions

Step 1 – Recognize Mental Traps (7 min)

Introduce common cognitive distortions such as:

- All-or-Nothing Thinking (“I failed, so I’m a failure”)
- Catastrophizing (“If I mess up, it’s the end of everything”)
- Overgeneralization (“This always happens to me”)
- Mind Reading (“They think I’m bad at this”)

Use simple examples related to sports.

Step 2 – Challenge the Thought (10 min)

In pairs or small groups, participants share a recent negative thought. Then, together, they practice “flipping” it to a balanced, realistic one.

Example:

- Negative: “I’m terrible at free throws.”
- Flipped: “I’m still practicing free throws and getting better.”

Step 3 – Thought Log (5 min)

Each participant writes down one mental trap they noticed recently and a positive “flip” they can use next time.

FINDING MEANING IN CHALLENGES

Introduce participants to logotherapy techniques like dereflection and paradoxical intention to help find meaning and purpose in setbacks.



Instructions

Step 1 – Brief Introduction

Explain:

- Logotherapy focuses on finding meaning even in difficult situations.
- Dereflexion: shifting focus away from distressing thoughts.
- Paradoxical Intention: facing fears by intentionally engaging with them in a controlled way.

Step 2 – Reflective Exercise

Ask participants to:

- Identify a current challenge or setback.
- Write down how they usually react emotionally.
- Try dereflection by listing positive or neutral activities to focus on instead of negative thoughts.
- Consider paradoxical intention: what would happen if they exaggerated their fear or worry (e.g., “I will try to feel more nervous on purpose”)?

Step 3 – Group Discussion

Share reflections on how changing focus or facing fears differently can reduce stress and create meaning.

KNOWING WHEN AND HOW TO SEEK HELP

Raise awareness about the importance of professional mental health support and reduce stigma around seeking counselling or psychotherapy, especially in sports.

Instructions

Step 1 – Why Seek Help?

Briefly explain:

- Mental health challenges are common and normal.
- Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- Professional support can improve performance and well-being.

Step 2 – Recognizing When to Seek Support

Discuss signs that may indicate it's time to get professional help, such as:

- Persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, or burnout
- Difficulty coping with daily tasks or sports demands
- Negative impact on relationships or motivation

Step 3 – How to Access Support

Share practical info:

- How to find a counsellor, therapist, or sport psychologist
- Confidentiality and what to expect in therapy
- Encouraging open conversations in teams and reducing stigma