Mental fitness- exercising your brain – Stage 5

Duration: 4 hours

## Educative purpose - why is the learning important?

Life the human body, the brain requires attention and support to function at its best. The incorporation of relaxation, sleep, mindfulness and training for the brain has the power to strengthen the mental health and mental fitness of an individual. This learning sequence will empower students to identify ways to improve their mental fitness.

## Learning goals

* Understand the difference between physical fitness and mental fitness.
* Recognise the importance of sleep and physical activity for positive wellbeing.
* Reflect on their own habits and plan for modifications to improve sleep patterns.
* Participate in a mindfulness session and reflect on their own response to mindfulness.

## Required resources and materials for preparation

**Student activities are set around:**

* Small group/ Individual activities
* Online/ offline

**Equipment required:**

* Laptop/Tablet/Phone
* Online access to
  + [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness)
  + [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/)
  + [The importance of sleep: what’s in it for you?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QAHeHocoZU) (duration 4:57)
  + [How to sleep better](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eLfn7Ewx_s) (duration 5:05)
  + [Recharge sleep app](https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps/recharge)
  + Infographic creation tool such as Canva
  + An online sharing space padlet, flip grid, OneDrive or Google classroom
* What is mindfulness? worksheet
* Recharging my batteries! worksheet

## Suggested syllabus content

**PD5-7** plans, implements and critiques strategies to promote health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity in their communities

All outcomes referred to in this unit come from [PDHPE Syllabus](https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-k-10-2018) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2018.

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| Key inquiry question | Content |
| How can I plan and advocate for health, safety, wellbeing and participation in a lifetime of physical activity? | * evaluate strategies and actions that aim to enhance health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity levels and plan to promote these in the school and community   + propose, implement and evaluate strategies and actions that influence their own and others’ mental health and wellbeing, for example participation in physical activity, sleep habits, mindfulness, connectedness S M |

## Teaching notes

### Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of PDHPE sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of PDHPE can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [PDHPE website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-syllabus-implementation/learning-environment).

### Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

### Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of PDHPE may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the PDHPE program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the PDHPE program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [PDHPE website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-syllabus-implementation/pdhpe-communication).

## Learning experiences

### Mental fitness

* Physical fitness is carrying out all our daily tasks without fatigue. With the increase in technology and its ability to reduce the labour of our tasks it could be making us unfit. To improve our fitness levels we play team sports, go to the gym, take the dog for a walk, go surfing or go for a ride. There are so many options both online, via apps and face to face to choose from to improve our physical fitness to suit everyone’s likes and needs. The opportunities are endless!
* Inquiry: Students answer the question what is mental fitness?
  + Students place their ideas on mental fitness in a designated classroom space or online space using a virtual post it note app. As a group, decide upon a definition of mental fitness.
  + Question: Why is there an emphasis on exercising the body and an individual’s physical fitness and less on exercising the mind and mental fitness?
  + Add into the share space ideas on how to stay mentally fit.

### Exercising the mind. What is mindfulness?

* Using the [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness), students explore Mindfulness, and complete the What is mindfulness? student worksheet.
* Login into the smiling minds website using either Facebook, twitter or google account details
* Students complete Mindfulness 101 The Breath from the [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/mindfulness) program

Smiling Mind is a unique web and app-based program developed by a team of psychologists with expertise in youth and adolescent therapy, Mindfulness Meditation and web-based wellness programs. Smiling Mind is a free tool that will assist in improving the lives of young Australians, and is available online or as a smartphone app — see more at: [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/)

**Note:** This program can be introduced in multiple ways at school including daily mindfulness. Whilst in setting outside of the school teachers can also encourage students to load the free app on to their phone/tablet for personal use.

* Create a resource sharing file via OneDrive or Google classroom and share your ideas around the following
  + what is mindfulness?
  + when might students find it useful to practice mindfulness? (for example during exams/assessments, to regulate mood, when feeling overwhelmed or down)
  + how can breathing support mindfulness?

Create an infographic or social media advertisement designed to attract the attention of other young people. Students use [Canva](https://www.canva.com/), or another digital tool to promote the benefits of using either the [Bite Back Website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness) or the [Smiling Mind](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/about-us) program for other young people.

### Exercising the mind. The impact of sleep

* Students watch the clip — [The importance of sleep: what’s in it for you?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QAHeHocoZU) (duration 4:57)
* While watching the clip, students record three things they have learnt.
* Discuss the clip and what has been learnt as a whole group.
* Students reflect on the question — is there is a connection with mindfulness and sleep? Yes/No? Why/Why not?

### Circle chat: benefits of sleep and how to get more sleep

* Students watch - [How to sleep better and record key points.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eLfn7Ewx_s) (duration 5:05).
* Students access Padlet to share:
  + one thing they learnt about ways to improve their sleep
  + one piece of interesting information about sleep they didn’t know before the clip.
* Write a short blog post for the rest of the class. Include in your post reasons that young people might experience difficulty going to sleep, why they should prioritise sleep and tips that you think others could use to improve their sleep.

**Note:** The language you use in a blog post will need to target who you are writing the blog post for. This means use language that will target other young people. You can use headings and subheadings in a blog post to keep your thoughts and ideas organised. Use images that will draw attention to the key ideas of your post and make it visually appealing.

### Exercising the mind. Practicing mindfulness and connectedness

* Mindfulness through photography allows the brain to focus on the little things in the world around you. In order to do the following activity, students will need to focus on the world around them, consciously taking it in and then capturing the moment.
* Using the [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness), students explore the [SNAP THAT](https://www.biteback.org.au/SnapThat/Index) creativity page.
* Take **three** photos. Upload the photos into the Google classroom, flipgrid or other online learning platform.
* Choose three of the photos that others have uploaded. Write a positive comment underneath the photo. Was the photo calming? Was the photo interesting? Did it capture a specific moment in time? How did it make you feel?
* Answer the following questions
  + How did you feel when you saw everyone’s photos?
  + How did you feel when others commented on your photo?
  + How can connecting with others support and improve your mood?

### Recharge

In pairs, students explore the [Recharge app](https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps/recharge) using the Recharging my batteries! worksheet.

## Student worksheet - What is mindfulness?

Explore the [Bite Back website](https://www.biteback.org.au/Learn/Mindfulness) to find out more about Mindfulness. Answer the questions below.

What is Mindfulness?

List three benefits of Mindfulness:

List two activities suggested by BiteBack that can build your mindfulness:

Choose one of the two activities to complete and report back on to your class on:

Name of the activity:

Write a brief summary:

Identify one of the activity’s:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Would you recommend the activity to a friend? Why/Why not? Rate the activity out of 5 and write a short review (2-3 sentences).

## Student worksheet - Recharging my batteries

Go to [Recharge sleep app](https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps/recharge) and answer the following questions:

What is recharge and who is it suitable for?

What behaviour is it focussed on improving?

The App has been made with young men in mind – however, do you think both males and females could use the App? Why/why not?

What is required in order to download the app?

If you didn’t have a phone/tablet or felt the App didn’t sound like you, what alternative activities could you participate in to assist in improving your sleep and energy? (Use further information gathered in the last activity through the YouTube clips watched).