

Lesson 4

Fitness

- A. Discuss in pairs. What do you understand by fitness?
- B. Read the texts below and match them with the pictures here.



An active exercise programme done to music, often in a class under the guidance of a trainer for maintaining sound physical health.

The emptying of the mind of thoughts, or the concentration of the mind on one thing, to aid mental or spiritual development, contemplation or relaxation. It broadens the horizon of mind, creates a situation of calm and quiet order(→)a bridge between mind and body.

A discipline that promotes spiritual unity with a supreme being through a system of postures and rituals and creates profound self-contentment. It was practised by great religious personalities of different religions and is still practiced in many countries.

A place where people do physical exercise with instruments, a modern trend in urban localities having separate arrangements for men and women, sometime with a trainer to guide physical fitness.

C. The following statements are based on the text in Section B. Work in pairs and decide which statements are true and which are false. If any statement is false, correct it.

1. One can perform gym activities with an instrument at home.
2. Yoga creates a harmony between mind and body.
3. Meditation involves a deep retrospection into one's innermost entity.
4. Contemplation is helpful in increasing one's concentration in academic activities.
5. Rural women are especially fond of aerobics in Bangladesh.
6. Meditation is a way to 'know thyself'.
7. Religious preachers of ancient times ushered the dawn of civilization by practising meditation.
8. Yoga includes meditation in order to bridge the outer and the inner entities of the soul.
9. Yoga can be performed only in open spaces.
10. Gym activities and outdoor sports are the same.

D. Read the following extract taken from a book by Francesc Miralles and Hector Garcia that presents readers with life-changing tools to uncover their personal "ikigai"- the Japanese word for 'a reason to live'.

Instant vacations: Getting there through meditation

Training the mind can get us to a place of flow more quickly. Meditation is one way to exercise our mental muscles.

There are many types of meditation, but they all have the same objective: calming the mind, observing our thoughts and emotions, and centering our focus on a single object.

The basic practice involves sitting with a straight back and focusing on your breath. Anyone can do it, and you feel a difference after just one session. By fixing your attention on the air moving in and out of your nose, you can slow the torrent of thoughts and clear your mental horizons.



The Archer's Secret

The winner of the 1988 Olympic gold medal for archery was a seventeen-year-old woman from South Korea. When asked how she prepared, she replied that the most important part of her training was meditating for two hours each day.

If we want to get better at reaching a state of flow, meditation is an excellent antidote to our smartphones and their notifications constantly clamoring for our attention.

One of the most common mistakes among people starting to meditate is worrying about doing it “right,” achieving absolute mental silence, or reaching “nirvana.” The most important thing is to focus on the journey.

Since the mind is a constant swirl of thoughts, ideas, and emotions, slowing down the “centrifuge”—even for just a few seconds—can help us feel more rested and leave us with a sense of clarity.

In fact, one of the things we learn in the practice of meditation is not to worry about anything that flits across our mental screen. The idea of killing our boss might flash into our mind, but we simply label it as a thought and let it pass like a cloud, without judging or rejecting it. It is only a thought—one of the sixty thousand we have every day, according to some experts.

Meditation generates alpha and theta brain waves. For those experienced in meditation, these waves appear right away, while it might take a half hour for a beginner to experience them. These relaxing brain waves are the ones that are activated right before we fall asleep, as we lie in the sun, or right after taking a hot bath.

We all carry a spa with us everywhere we go. It's just a matter of knowing how to get in—something anyone can do, with a bit of practice.

Taken from: Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy life

E. The words in the box below are taken from the text. Fill in the blanks by writing the word that matches the definition.

flow, centrifuge, nirvana, mental horizons, alpha and theta brain waves

1. A state of complete tranquility or bliss. _____
2. A type of brain wave associated with relaxation. _____
3. A process of spinning that separates particles from liquids. _____
4. The state of being in a productive, effortless state of mind. _____
5. The extent of one's cognitive or perceptual awareness. _____

F. The writer suggests that meditation can be beneficial for anyone, even if practiced imperfectly. The basic meditation exercise involves sitting upright and focusing on your breath as it moves in and out of your body.

How about trying a one-minute meditation session with your classmates? Your teacher can time the session and guide you on when to stop.

Instructions:

- o Close your eyes and attempt to clear your mind of all thoughts.
- o Take deep, slow, and steady breaths.
- o Focus solely on the process of your breath moving in and out of your body.
- o No peeking!

After the session, answer the following questions:

- i. Did you notice any changes in your feelings and thoughts after the session?
- ii. Were you successful in clearing your mind of all thoughts? Discuss how easy or difficult it was for you to focus.
- iii. Do you think practicing meditation regularly could impact your daily life? Explain how.



G. Fill in the blanks with the correct preposition from the box below:

in during at for for on to by

- i. We all went _____ a walk to clear our minds after the stressful day.
- ii. He started meditating _____ the mornings to improve his concentration.
- iii. The session lasted _____ 10 minutes, but it felt much shorter.
- iv. Meditation is beneficial _____ people of all ages.
- v. _____ everyone's surprise, the beginner quickly reached nirvana.
- vi. Ikigai can be achieved _____ anyone, regardless of age.
- vii. The workshop will be held _____ 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.
- viii. Meditation can help you relax _____ stressful situations.

H. Group work

Imagine you and your friends are launching a meditation centre that will offer sessions for corporate employees to help them manage work-related stress.

In groups of five, design a leaflet—either hand-written or printed—to promote your centre. Use details from the extract "Instant Vacations: Getting There Through Meditation" along with your own ideas.

