

fit women's fitness

8 MOVES
FOR A
**killer
bod**

RESULTS?
YOU BETCHA!

**A WEEK'S
WORTH OF
HEALTHY
DINNERS,
SORTED!**

#FITSPO 2.0
HOW TO MAKE IT
WORK FOR YOU

**Hello,
glow!**
WHAT TO
EAT FOR
HAPPY SKIN

12-PAGE SPECIAL

MAY 2018
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RUN HOT!

✓ **BEAT INJURY**
✓ **SMASH GOALS**
✓ **STAY MOTIVATED**

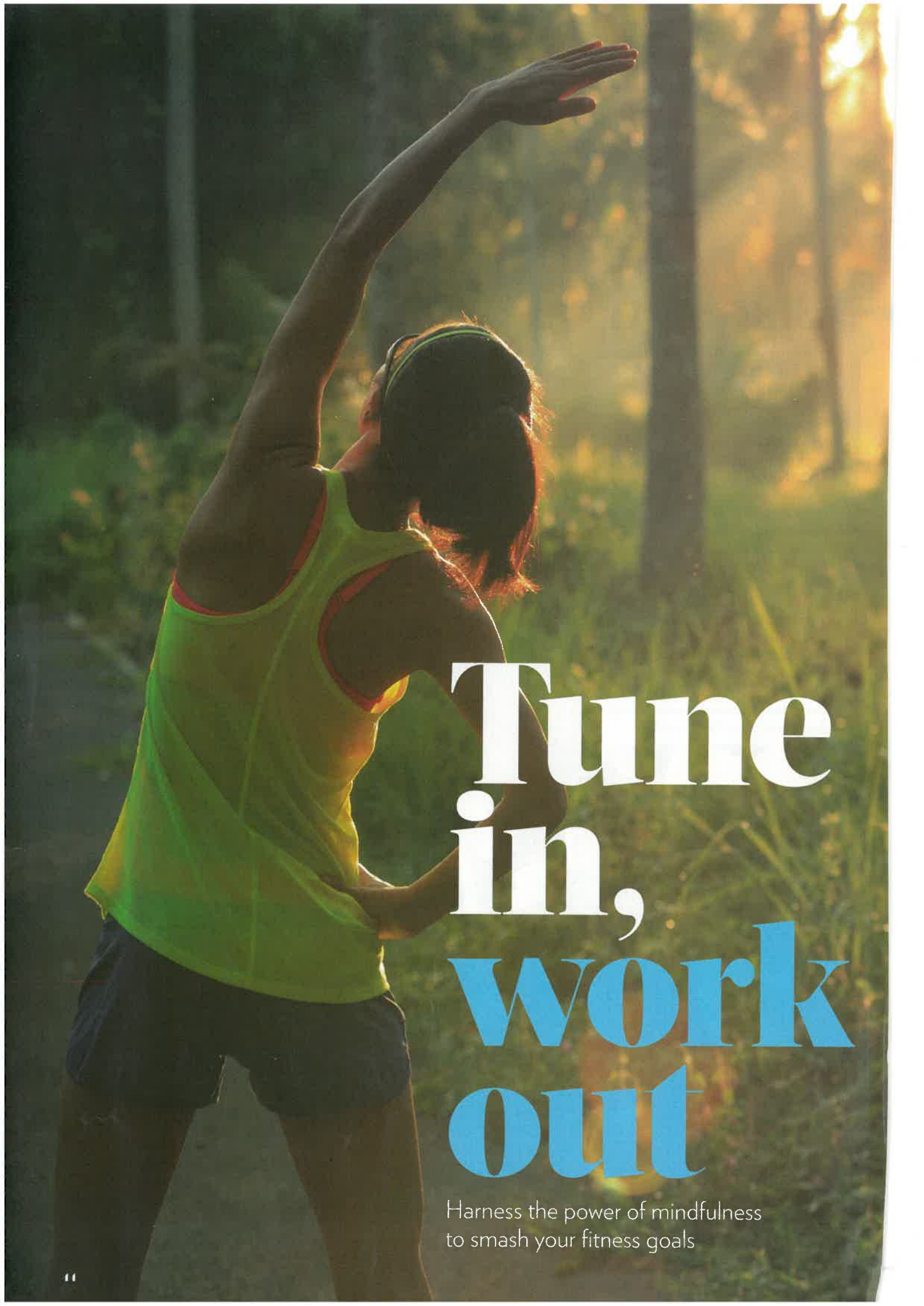
+ LAURA HENSHAW'S
GET-STARTED GUIDE

THE BEST
SPORTS BRA
FOR EVERY
SHAPE
(tried + tested)



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FEEL BETTER IN 5 EASY PICK-ME-UPS TO TRY TODAY

A woman in a neon green tank top and dark shorts is shown from the back, stretching her right arm upwards. She is wearing a headband and has her hair tied back. The background is a park with tall grass and trees, illuminated by the warm, golden light of a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and energetic.

Tune in, work out

Harness the power of mindfulness
to smash your fitness goals

WHAT DO WE WANT? ZEN! WHERE DO WE GET IT? Yoga!

Right? Not necessarily. If you don't feel satisfied unless you can wring a puddle of sweat out of your sports bra at the end of your workout, meditative practices such as yoga and Tai Chi probably aren't your go-to, but it doesn't mean you have to miss out on the mind-body boost of these slower-paced workouts.

The latest trend in fitness is about integrating mindfulness techniques into even the most intense sweat sessions. US studio Circuit of Change is leading the charge – its Mind Body Bootcamp class combines meditation, yoga, cardio kickboxing and HIIT all in one 50-minute workout.

While we wait for this hot class to make its way to our shores, experts suggest a DIY approach – that is, applying mindfulness meditation principles to your everyday workouts. It's not as crazy as it might sound when you consider mindfulness is about keeping your attention in the present moment. And, according to Dr Keith A Kaufman, author of the book *Mindful Sport Performance Enhancement: Mental Training for Athletes and Coaches* (mindfulsportperformance.org), tapping into this mental state is an easy way to enhance your performance and your enjoyment of exercise.

Mind control

Have you ever been steadily following the trainer's instructions in a fitness class, or putting one foot in front of another in a race, only to suddenly get psyched out by negative thoughts? "I'll never be as fit as the other girls in this class – why am I even here?" or, "I'm getting tired and there's no way I'll be able to finish this race, so I may as well give up now."

Traditionally, sports psychologists used psychological skills training, or PST, to teach athletes to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. "But this change-based approach can be a bit of a trap," says Dr Kaufman. "Sometimes when we try to change a negative thought into a positive one, we end up focusing on the negative even more."

Mindfulness offers a different way of relating to thoughts. "Let's say you're running a race and your archrival passes you," says Dr Kaufman. "You find yourself thinking, 'This is terrible, I'm going to lose to this person, this is so embarrassing.' Rather than teaching you

that these thoughts are wrong and need to be changed, which can lead to even more frustration, mindfulness helps you recognise your thoughts, realise that they're not necessarily facts, and let them go."

So, just because your frenemy passed you doesn't mean she'll be waiting at the finish line with a smug look on her face. "In mindfulness, we recognise that situations are constantly evolving, and when you're in the middle of something it's not the end," says Dr Kaufman. "You try to be present with what's happening and not think about the past or get ahead of yourself and attach importance to all the what-ifs that come up. In the context of your race, you might think, 'I got passed and I'm angry. That's a natural reaction. But what do I want to focus on right now? My race. Can I tweak my form, do I have more energy in reserve, is there anything else I can do to change my standing? Or should I keep doing what I'm doing because my rival tends to burn out toward the finish line and I'll catch up to her later?'"

Dr Kaufman says it all comes down to mental efficiency. "Being present frees up tons of resources so we can pay attention to what's most important," he explains. "Getting wrapped up in our emotions takes us out of the moment and can rob us of control over what we're doing."

In the zone

Not only can mindfulness transform you into a fitness warrior and a steely competitor, it can also boost your overall enjoyment of exercise.

"When you're present with something, it tends to enhance your experience of it," says Dr Kaufman. "Mindfulness can even help you enter a flow state. Flow is known as 'optimal experience'; in sport, we often talk about it as 'being in the zone'. And part of what comes with entering a flow state is a real sense of joy and pleasure in what you're doing. That's a pretty powerful thing."

Like most skills, it takes practice – work that mindfulness muscle whenever you hit the gym and you'll gradually build up your ability to stay anchored in the present, and enjoy the benefits that come from an in-sync body and mind. Enter the new, zen you – and we're talking on the regular, not just when you're in downward dog.

5 ways to work out mindfully

These tuning-in tricks will help you upgrade your morning run, weights workout or HIIT class

#1

Unplug your mind

Next time you head out for a run, leave all your devices at home. You might think you can't survive without your running app, workout playlist or fitness tracker, but you'll be amazed at how freeing it is to exercise without any gadgets weighing you down.

#2

Set an intention

You don't have to be a yogi to set an intention for your session. Before you start your workout, remind yourself of your general intention for exercising. This could be, "Increase my strength" or "Boost my mood". Then, set a specific intention for that session. Perhaps you want to run 10K for the first time or do 50 squats. Focus on your intention while you work out, but don't berate yourself if you don't accomplish it.

#3

Feel your breath

Paying attention to the rhythm of your breath is an easy way to stay grounded in the present moment. "Focus your attention on how it feels when you breathe in and out," says performance psychologist Jennifer Miccoli (metuf.com). "Focus on how your chest and abdomen move."

#4

Look around you

If your mind starts to wander to unhelpful thoughts in the past or the future ("I shouldn't have eaten that cake this morning" or, "I have to work late, so I won't have time to exercise"), zero in on elements in your external environment to bring your attention back to the moment. "Observe trees moving in the breeze or watch the cars driving past," suggests Miccoli. "If you're exercising indoors, focus on colours or patterns around you."

#5

Look inside you

While you move, make an effort to notice the parts of your body that feel tense or painful and try to sit within the sensation rather than fight against it. Then, pay attention to the areas that feel relaxed or strong. You'll soon notice that your mind is sitting squarely in the now. 