

Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Yoga in Reducing Burnout among Sports Coaches and Trainers

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ABSTRACT

Being exhausted emotionally, depersonalizing and not feeling their accomplishments are big challenges for sports coaches and trainers due to constant pressure on their minds, intense demands and failure to recover as required. This study is designed to find out if practicing structured Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) lessens the burnout symptoms found in this group. Of the 60 participants who took part in the study, 30 were given the Intervention program and 30 were not. The people in the intervention group did an 8-week MBY program combining mindfulness meditation, yoga poses and controlled breathing, experiencing each session three times a week and lasting 60 minutes. To measure burnout at the start and finish of the study, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to check three areas: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP) and Personal Accomplishment (PA). Statistically important improvements were seen in the MBY group when compared to the controls. Each of the subscales showed that participants had significantly reduced EE and DP and increased PA, all with p-values < 0.01. It can be concluded from these results that MBY promotes strong mental skills, better handles dealing with stress and revives what educators can achieve in their profession. The health and life skills you gain from mindfulness and yoga may help calm your stress system and make it easier to manage your feelings. This study points out that MBY may be a cost-effective, widely adaptable and environmentally friendly method for managing burnout in demanding jobs. Although early results are encouraging, we still need larger and more representative studies to confirm the lasting results and their usefulness for everyone. If MBY programs are added to organizational wellness strategies, they may improve both the mental health and engagement at work of athletes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Burnout is now recognized as an important health problem at work, mainly in jobs that require high performance and pressure. As a psychological condition produced by absorbing chronic workplace and organizational pressures, burnout consists of three main areas: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP) and not feeling a sense of achievement (PA). While burnout was at first considered an issue only in healthcare and social services, it has since become noticeable in sports because coaches and trainers are pushed hard to regularly succeed, help athletes progress and satisfy the expectations of their teams. Because athletes are more likely to get psychological help, coaches and trainers usually deal with lots of stress without the same support for themselves.

Working long hours, investing a lot of emotional energy and frequently experiencing difficulties with either athletes or colleague problems puts coaches and trainers at risk for burnout. Living with chronic stress without learning to cope can cause someone to become depressed, doubtful, less productive and have a negative effect on their performance, social life and choices. This situation impacts coaches and trainers,

changes the athletic environment and can harm an athlete's achievement, making it even more important to intervene with burnout.

Although methods like workload decrease, leave or counseling can help a bit, they rarely deal with how a person's mind and body communicate during psychological recovery. Many people have started using mind-body interventions in recent years because they promote overall awareness, balanced emotions and a healthy body. When you practice mindfulness, you notice what's around you and are not judgmental which makes it easier to step away from thoughts that are causing unease or rumination. Practicing yoga through exercise, breathing and relaxing helps support mindfulness by loosening our muscles and engaging the part of the nervous system that is soothing.

MBY uses the two practices together as a method to help restore mental focus, emotional balance and overall health. Although MBY has worked well in clinics and the workplace, its use among sports coaches and trainers has hardly been explored. Because the MBY profession has multiple challenges, the program may provide an effective strategy to manage burnout and grow long-term resilience. The goal of this project is to assess how effective an 8-week MBY program is in lifting burnout amongst sports coaches and trainers which will add to the expanding field of mental health care in the sports area.

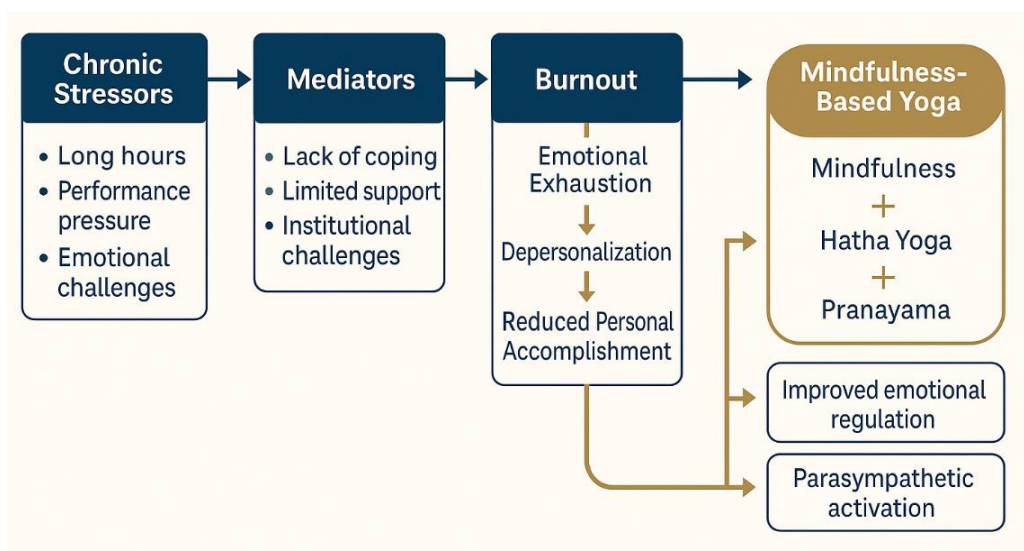


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Burnout Development and Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) Intervention in Sports Professionals

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Burnout is a problem that is being noticed more often among sports professionals, mainly those in coaching and training, since they deal with limited rest, high emotions, lots of hours and constant reviews of their actions. They found that these conditions can cause emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a fall in self-accomplishment which are crucial dimensions in burnout measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). At first, experts paid attention to burnout in healthcare workers and teachers, but the latest research points out that sports people also experience it, as their pressure comes largely from psychological demands to be responsible for the team, athletes and the team's future.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) have attracted a great deal of interest as a possible remedy for stress in the workplace. Since being introduced by Kabat-Zinn in (2003), mindfulness from Buddhist beliefs urges us to pay close attention to the present and avoid reactive behavior. Mindfulness practice has been found to strengthen self-control, calm stressful reactions and sharpen emotions which all help ward off burnout. According to Shapiro et al. (2005), MBIs helped healthcare professionals reduce their stress and exhaustion, so they could also be applied to other intense workplaces.

At the same time, yoga has been found to help with stress management and increase well-being. Yoga combining postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama) and meditation has been proven to decrease stress hormones, raise mood, strengthen our ability to cope and enhance our nervous system's ability to handle stress (Field, 2011). A paper by Büssing et al. (2012) concluded that yoga can help improve a person's mental state, emotional health and happiness, but this benefit only appears when the practice is regular and structured.

When practiced together, Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) helps people deal with the mental and physical aspects of burnout at the same time. Although MBY programs have made a difference in businesses and healthcare institutions (Good et al., 2016), there is not much research on how MBY is used with professional athletes. Because coaches and trainers may not give enough attention to self-care, using MBY could offer a safe, long-term method that supports emotional strength, cuts back on exhaustion and strengthens personal motivation.

Ultimately, both mindfulness and yoga appear effective when treating stress and burnout. Nevertheless, the MBY approach which unites cognitive and physical therapy, has yet to be fully explored in sport. We aim to fill this research gap by checking the effects of a 8-week MBY program on burnout among sports coaches and trainers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

For this research, 60 certified sports coaches and physical trainers were chosen based on their relevance to testing if burnout could be reduced through Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY). A range of participants was obtained from sports academies situated in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka to ensure the study applied to different geographic groups. Most of the participants were 36.2 years old, with a standard deviation of 5.4 years which reflects a group of experts with plenty of field experience. In the sample, there were 38 men and 22 women, so data would be balanced for gender-based analysis if it was needed. Proper selection of individuals was carried out by following a list of specific inclusion criteria. Before taking part, participants were expected to have at least three years of ongoing coaching or training experience on a professional or semi-professional level. The criterion targeted people who had spent enough time coaching to experience the stressful demands of that field.



Figure 2. Geographic Distribution of Study Participants Across Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Karnataka

Second, everyone involved was tested with the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) before any intervention. Only the individuals who scored at a moderate level for burnout, shown by EE, DP and PA, were included in our final sample. Participants were screened for major burnout symptoms that could warrant clinical care or very low burnout rates and were excluded, as the project's purpose was to support those most likely to need help. Individuals took part in the trial only after they had given written consent. The research benefits from being methodologically correct and relevant which the designed inclusion process and group of participants achieved.

Table 1. Demographic and Screening Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristic	Value
Total Participants	60
Gender	38 Males (63.3%), 22 Females (36.7%)
Mean Age (\pm SD)	36.2 \pm 5.4 years
State-wise Recruitment	Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka
Minimum Coaching Experience	\geq 3 years
Burnout Screening Tool	MBI-HSS
Burnout Level at Entry	Moderate
Exclusion Criteria	Severe burnout or very low MBI

3.2. Design

The golden standard for researching intervention effectiveness is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) and that's the design used in this study. Of the 60 participants, 30 were chosen for the Mindfulness-Based Yoga group and the other 30 were put on the waitlist and continued working as usual while the study ran. We used a computerized random number generator for randomization to keep the allocation fair and to reduce selection bias.

An 8-week MBY program was developed for the intervention group and included mindfulness meditation, Hatha yoga positions and regular breathing exercises (pranayama). The length of every meeting was 60 minutes and I had sessions three times each week for a total of 24 sessions. All sessions were taught by certified instructors who used the same curriculum so that the experiences for each participant were the same. These sessions were set up in quiet, special rooms within the sports academies to help participants pay full attention. We kept an eye on whether individuals attended and prompted them to keep records of their practice and what they thought about it.

In comparison, the control group did the same type of training as before and was told to not follow any new relaxation or mindfulness schedules. By using this approach, all participants would obtain access to MBY later, after the study was over and the design made it possible to compare the effectiveness of the intervention. To prevent errors in the research, both groups did not know the exact research hypotheses and outcome assessors were not told which groups the people were in. Before and after taking part in the intervention, all participants in each group were assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) in the same way. Because of the controlled and randomized nature of the study, results could only be traced to the MBY program.

Duration: 8 Weeks
Frequency: 3 sessions/week

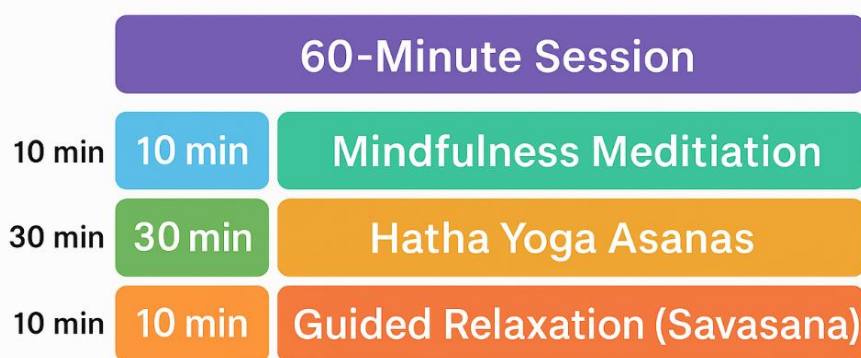


Figure 3. Weekly Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) Program Structure

3.3. Intervention

MBY was crafted carefully as a program that combines mindfulness and classic Hatha yoga, both in a planned structure. Over 8 weeks, the intervention provided support for the physical, emotional and mental factors that often result in burnout for coaches and trainers. We worked together for 24 weeks, having a session once every three days that lasted 60 minutes. Both mindfulness and yoga classes were directed by instructors certified in MBSR and classical yoga which made sure everyone was safe and cared for.



Figure 4. Structure and Therapeutic Focus of Each Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) Session

- **Mindfulness Meditation (10 minutes):** Each session began with a guided mindfulness meditation focusing on breath awareness and body scan techniques. Participants were encouraged to anchor their attention to the rhythm of their breath and bodily sensations, helping to cultivate present-moment awareness and reduce cognitive rumination. The body scan also served to identify areas of physical tension, promoting mind-body connectivity and grounding attention inward—a crucial first step in emotional regulation.
- **Yoga Postures (Asanas) (30 minutes):** This segment involved a sequence of Hatha yoga postures, chosen for their emphasis on flexibility, balance, and musculoskeletal stability. Postures were performed in a slow, deliberate manner, with attention directed toward breath synchronization and proper alignment. The sequence included foundational asanas such as Tadasana (Mountain Pose), Trikonasana (Triangle Pose), Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose), and Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose). These were selected to accommodate varying fitness levels while promoting physical relaxation and somatic awareness, both of which are beneficial for stress reduction.
- **Pranayama (10 minutes):** After the physical postures, participants engaged in controlled breathing practices, known as pranayama, which are central to yogic self-regulation. The two primary techniques practiced were NadiShodhana (alternate nostril breathing), aimed at balancing the autonomic nervous system and reducing anxiety, and Bhramari (bee breath), known for its calming effect on the mind. These practices were conducted in a seated posture with eyes closed, emphasizing internal focus and slow, rhythmic inhalations and exhalations.
- **Guided Relaxation (10 minutes):** Each session concluded with Savasana (Corpse Pose), a deep relaxation practice facilitated through guided imagery and verbal cues. This stage allowed participants to integrate the physical and mental benefits of the session, promoting parasympathetic activation, muscle relaxation, and mental clarity. It served as a powerful reset, enabling full-body rest and emotional release.

Besides treating acute symptoms, the program also helped people gain the resilience needed to protect against any future burnout by teaching tools they could reuse independently. The group also received instructions on video and print to help them work on cooking at home. Since stress can affect the body and mind differently, the multimodal process considered both mental and physical aspects and made the program fitting for sports trainers and coaches.

Table 2. MBY Session Elements and Psychological/Physiological Benefits

Component	Duration	Techniques/Examples	Target Outcomes
Mindfulness Meditation	10 min	Breath awareness, body scan	Present-moment focus, emotional regulation
Yoga Postures (Asanas)	30 min	Tadasana, Trikonasana, Bhujangasana, Setu Bandhasana	Flexibility, posture, physical tension release
Pranayama	10 min	NadiShodhana, Bhramari	Autonomic balance, reduced anxiety
Guided Relaxation	10 min	Savasana with guided imagery	Deep rest, parasympathetic activation, clarity

3.4. Outcome Measures

Burnout in sports coaches and trainers was determined as the main outcome and measured by means of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS). The MBI-HSS is accepted by experts and frequently used to assess burnout among people who are involved in service professions such as teaching, medicine and coaching. It looks at burnout by analyzing three key subscales that target different aspects of the syndrome.

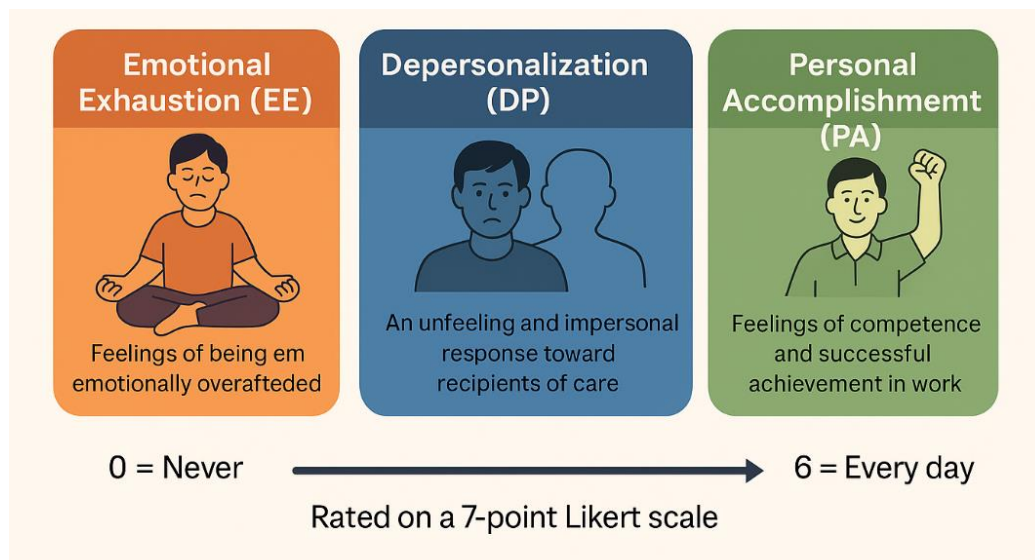


Figure 5. Dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-HSS) and Their Assessment on a 7-Point Likert Scale

- **Emotional Exhaustion (EE):** This subscale measures the extent to which individuals feel emotionally depleted, fatigued, and overwhelmed by their work. It reflects the emotional cost of caring and sustained professional interaction, often experienced as chronic tiredness, lack of energy, and a sense of being emotionally drained.
- **Depersonalization (DP):** This dimension captures the development of a cynical or detached attitude toward the people one works with—in this case, athletes, trainees, or colleagues. Higher scores on this scale indicate an impersonal and emotionally distanced response, which can diminish the quality of coach-athlete interactions and overall effectiveness.
- **Personal Accomplishment (PA):** This subscale assesses the degree to which individuals feel competent and successful in their professional role. Unlike EE and DP, higher scores on PA are desirable, as they indicate a sense of efficacy and achievement in one's work. Lower PA scores are indicative of burnout-related feelings of ineffectiveness and dissatisfaction.

Each item on the MBI-HSS is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Every day"), allowing for a quantitative evaluation of the participant's frequency of burnout-related experiences. The tool has demonstrated strong **reliability** and **validity** across various occupational populations, making it a suitable choice for assessing the effects of interventions like Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY).

4. RESULTS

The results suggested that the Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) approach helped to decrease burnout for sports coaches and trainers. Before the intervention began, statistical tests confirmed that the intervention and control groups were equal in Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP) and Personal Accomplishment (PA). A comparison of scores within the MBY group at the start and end of the 8-week intervention using paired t-tests revealed meaningful increases in every aspect of MBI-HSS.

- **Emotional Exhaustion (EE):** Reduced from a mean of 27.6 ± 5.4 to 20.5 ± 4.9 , reflecting a mean reduction of 7.1 points ($p < 0.001$).
- **Depersonalization (DP):** Decreased from 11.2 ± 3.1 to 6.6 ± 2.7 , indicating a mean reduction of 4.6 points ($p < 0.001$).

- **Personal Accomplishment (PA):** Improved significantly from 28.7 ± 4.3 to 35.0 ± 4.9 , representing a mean increase of 6.3 points ($p < 0.001$).

In contrast, the control group, which did not receive any intervention and continued with their usual routines, showed no statistically significant changes across any of the MBI subscales.

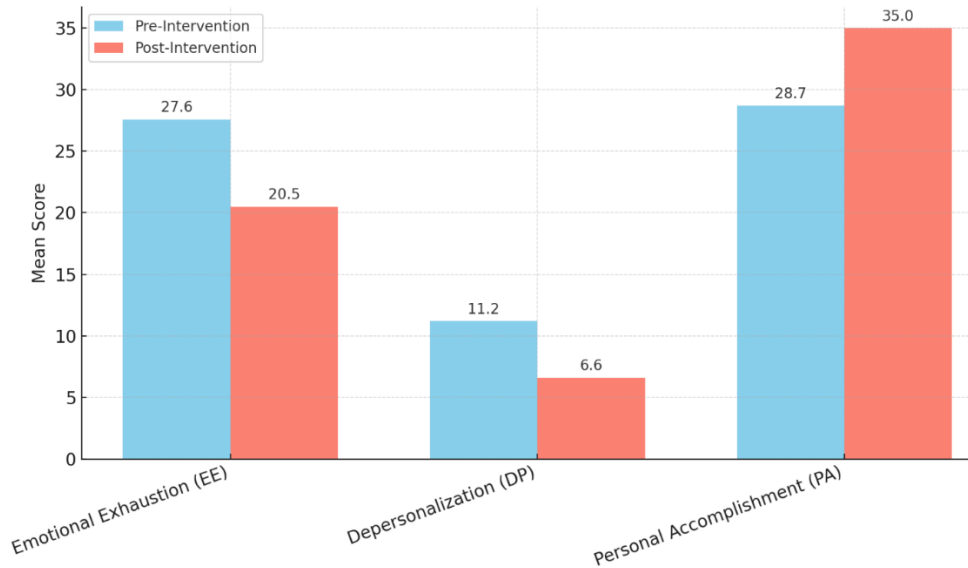


Figure 6. Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention MBI Scores (EE, DP, PA)

Table 3. Statistical Analysis of Burnout Indicators

Subscale	Group	Pre-Score (Mean±SD)	Post-Score (Mean±SD)	p-value
EE	MBY	27.6 ± 5.4	20.5 ± 4.9	<0.001
DP	MBY	11.2 ± 3.1	6.6 ± 2.7	<0.001
PA	MBY	28.7 ± 4.3	35.0 ± 4.9	<0.001

5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) can be a beneficial intervention for quickly helping sports coaches and trainers coping with burnout. The drop in Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalization (DP) and the rise in Personal Accomplishment (PA) demonstrate that MBY can lower the main symptoms of burnout and at the same time raise motivation, self-belief and satisfaction on the job. The study found that mindfulness meditation furthered emotional control and focused thinking by making individuals more aware of the moment and present, but Hatha yoga and breathing exercises tended to influence the body's nervous system, help it settle and relax muscles. The rise in PA points to how the intervention helps people gain strength and a sense of purpose, just like earlier studies suggest mind-body practices can do for psychological strength and involvement in work. But there are some restrictions associated with the study. In just 8 weeks, the intervention used only data from self-reports, so its results could be affected by what people expect and how they interpret things. Also, because objective physiological markers are not available, it is difficult to draw conclusions about underlying brain changes. Future studies should seek to overcome these gaps by adding larger and more different groups to the sample, measuring biological markers like cortisol and heart rate variability and checking if the good results seen during the interventions can be maintained over an extended period. This strategy is still useful, scalable and drug-free, proving to be an effective solution for burnout in pressured workplaces and potentially ideal for many occupational health and wellness programs.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that taking part in Mindfulness-Based Yoga (MBY) can significantly ease burnout symptoms and increase coaches' and trainers' psychological well-being. Bringing

together mindfulness meditation and the body-relaxing aspects of Hatha yoga and breath helps MBY reduce occupational stress for both the mind and body. As a result of the 8-week structured program, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization rates were significantly reduced and participants experienced a major self-esteem boost in their abilities, reinforcing their strong motivation and self-belief in their work. They prove that MBY helps people regulate their emotions, pay more attention to their internal states and boosts their resilience, thanks to the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system—essential for many demanding jobs. In addition, the program is affordable, easy to introduce and does not rely on medicine, making it well suited for continued development and important wellness programs in any industry. Since occupational stress in coaching is on the rise today, MBY gives a helpful guide to maintaining your mental wellbeing, enjoying your work and continuing to coach at your highest standard. Further studies should look at how MBY affects many professions and what its continuing influence may be.

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