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## MINDFULNESS FOR MEN:

Even though there is a great deal of evidence that mindfulness is of great benefit to men's health it can easily be dismissed as a woman's activity. Most yoga classes in this country are predominantly attended by young women. Similarly young women are the major attendees at meditation and mindfulness classes.



Nonetheless, it is common to see the Australian cricket team practicing yoga. It is well documented that Paul Roos used mindfulness when successfully training the Sydney Swans to victory. The famous basketball teams, the Chicago Bulls and the LA Lakers attribute much of their success to the practice of mindfulness meditation.

The origins of meditation are believed to be a far cry from the Eastern Holy men. Many believe that mindfulness practices have their origin in hunters sitting quietly with awareness as they wait for their prey to appear. It also may surprise to hear that mindfulness meditation is far from being a soft new age crystal dangling affair. It is actually a serious discipline that requires commitment to training in order to harvest its benefits.

There is no reason why a meat eating bloke wouldn't want to join this tradition. Not only can it improve sporting and hunting performance, it is great for work performance and general health as well. I can protect against developing addictions as well as enhancing the ability to handle stress well. It decreases the risk of getting colds and flu and keeps the blood pressure down. It can also help you to be a better communicator and a better lover and let's face it that's not a bad thing for most blokes. If it's good enough for a Chicago Bull, then it's good enough for a red blooded Aussie bloke. Just think about it!

I was recently asked about mindfulness for MEN (Aussie blokes) that may relate to cancer wellbeing from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond.

In its essence mindfulness is the same for men and women.

However, the presentation can be more or less masculine or feminine in style. A lot of what is out there is more feminine in style with focus on pretty meditation shrines, beautiful bells and rituals that involve soft smooth movements. All these accoutrements represent style rather than substance. Mindfulness also has a tradition of strong masculine style, especially in the Eastern Martial Arts. In these traditions the rituals focus on strength and discipline.

Regardless of whether we start with a masculine or feminine influence, we will become more familiar with the other side of our personalities as awareness grows with mindfulness practice. Some blokes, who are feeling fragile and

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vulnerable after a diagnosis of cancer, will welcome the nurturing energy that is more obvious in more feminine approaches. Other men in the same position will find that approach alienating and will prefer the masculine tough love approach. The important thing to know is that both approaches are valid and each teacher will have their own way of blending the two. It is reasonable for anyone to shop around for a teacher who is the right match.

The real important pointers for finding a good teacher can be found at <https://www.mindfulness.org.au/assessing-mindfulness-teacher>.

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