

Student Comprehension Worksheet

Directions: Read the online *Science News* article "[How mindfulness-based training can give elite athletes a mental edge](#)," which explores new research into psychological tools to improve mental health, and answer the following questions. A version of the article, "Mental gymnastics," appears in the January 29, 2022 issue of *Science News*.

- 1. During the 2021 Summer Olympics, why did U.S. gymnast Simone Biles withdraw from most of the events for which she qualified? How did people react to her decision?**
- 2. Create a definition of "stigma" based on your understanding of the article. What effects does the stigma around mental health have on elite athletes?**
- 3. What psychological tools are scientists investigating that may improve athletes' mental health? How can athletes benefit from better mental health?**

Team tests

- 4. What did mindfulness training teach the players on the women's lacrosse team at Marymount University in Virginia? How did the training appear to affect players' mental health?**
- 5. Did the training appear to improve the team's overall performance? Make sure to cite evidence from the article in your answer.**
- 6. Why do researchers think that mindfulness training did not improve the mental health of Miami Hurricanes football players? What did the training improve? Make sure to cite evidence from the article in your answer.**
- 7. How are attention and mental health related, according to neuroscientist Amishi Jha?**

Learned discipline

8. Psychologist Tommy Minkler likens mindfulness training to push-ups for the brain. Explain the analogy based on your understanding of the article and state why Minkler's statement is considered an analogy.

9. What is one limitation in interpreting the findings of mindfulness research?

10. How might mindfulness training backfire for some athletes? What can be done for these athletes?

No judgments

11. What is the goal of ACT? How does it work?

12. What have studies of athletes that get a combination of mindfulness training and ACT shown?

13. How do mindfulness training and ACT benefit student athletes off the field, according to some researchers?