

Mindful Space

Mindfulness Course Handbook

Section 1 – Waking up to life

8-WEEK COURSE IN MINDFULNESS (MBSR/MBCT)

8 Tuesday evening sessions via zoom: 2 February- 23 March 2021

HALF-DAY ONLINE RETREAT

Saturday 13 March (10.00am-1.00pm)

MEMBERS' WORKSHOPS

Friday 9 April and Tuesday 20 April, 7-9pm are workshops for 8-week course graduates. You're very welcome to attend one of these.

Vicki Worsley

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Mindful Space

Learning to live in the moment

Mindfulness course overview

Section 1 – Waking up to life

1. Being vs doing
2. Mindful living
3. Mindfulness and the body

Section 2 – Turning towards difficulty

4. Stress triggers and loops
5. Your pain is not you
6. Drop the Storyline: Mindfulness of emotions

Section 3 – Connecting to life

7. Kindness and compassion
8. Letting everything become your teacher

Welcome to the Mindful Space Course in Mindfulness-MBSR/MBCT

Course aim and objectives

The aim is that by the end of the course, you will feel more comfortable in yourself and:

- Learn new ways of handling pain, difficult feelings, stress and moods
- Develop patience, resilience, compassion, open-mindedness, determination and focus
- Establish/deepen your meditation practice
- Become more attuned to yourself, others and the world around you
- Develop your body awareness

Home practice

This is a crucial part of the course and you will only get the most out of the course if you do set up and maintain a regular meditation and mindfulness practice. If you are struggling with this do speak to your course mates and tutor.

Half-Day Online Retreat

This will take place on Saturday 13 March. It will be an opportunity to deepen your practice, experience silence and to meet other meditators.

Membership Programme

Once you finish the 8-week course you might be interested in joining the membership programme. It includes monthly mindfulness workshops, mentoring and silent practice days.

Support outside the sessions

The more you make mindfulness part of your life, the more you will benefit. Explain what you are doing and why, to you family and anyone you live with. Make contact with your course participants outside the sessions. Share a coffee over zoom and chat about the course, or do some mindfulness practice together.

Absences

Do try to attend every session. If you know you will be absent please text to let your tutor know. After the session do contact your course mates to find out what you missed. In particular do check what the home practice is and try to do it.

Enjoy the course!

Vicki

Session One – Being vs doing

- The science of meditation
 - Meditation posture
 - Mindfulness of breathing
 - Setting up your practice
 - Resource list
 - Home practice
-

Two dogs

A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner:

“Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.”

When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied,

“The one I feed the most.”

Training a puppy, Jack Kornfield

Meditation is very much like training a puppy. You put the puppy down and say, ‘Stay.’ Does the puppy listen? It gets up and it runs away. You sit the puppy back down again. ‘Stay.’ And the puppy runs away over and over again... Our minds are much the same as the puppy... we have to start over and over again... Always remember that in training the puppy we want to end up with the puppy as our friend. In the same way, we must practice seeing our mind and body as ‘friend.’

The Science of Meditation – Key benefits

8-week course practitioners showed:

- Greater resilience to pain, Jon Kabat-Zinn
- More emotional balance, less likely to struggle with low mood, Williams and Teasdale
- Lower stress levels and greater sense of well-being, Jon Kabat-Zinn

To get the benefits you have to put the work in!



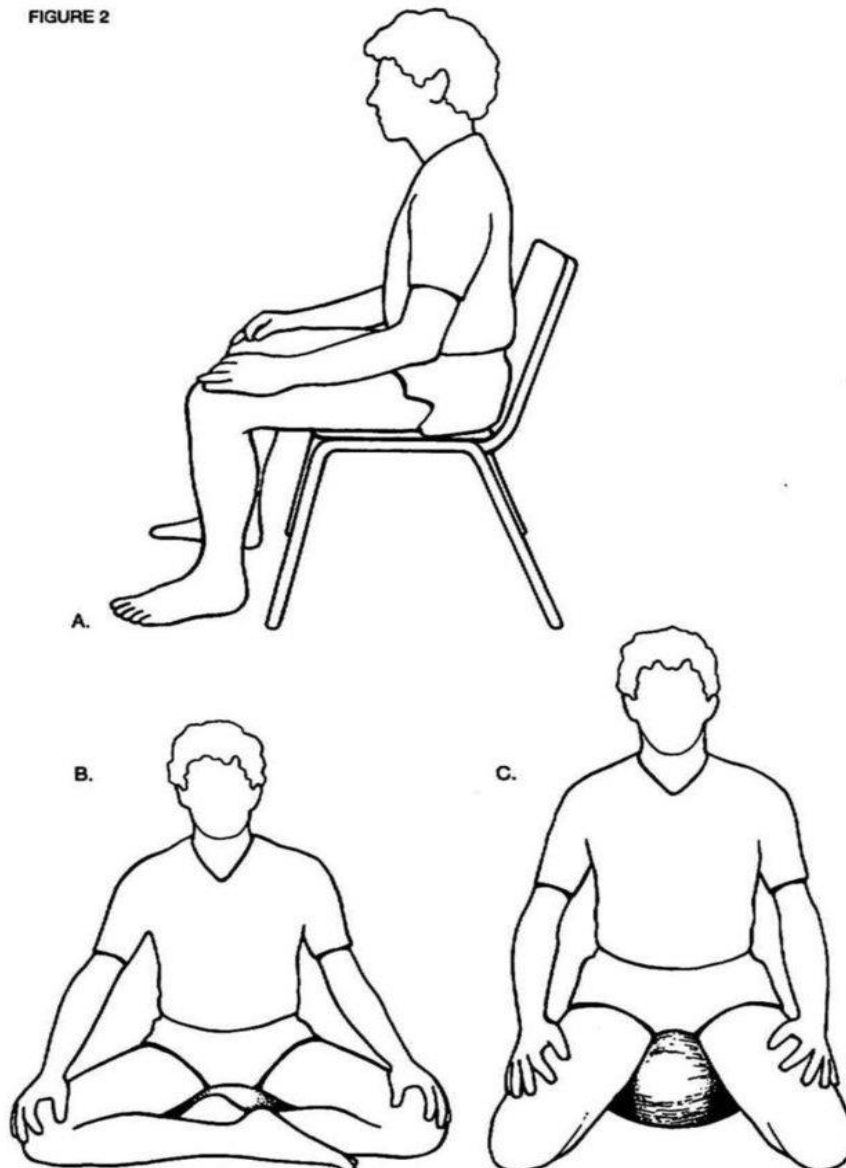
Mindfulness doesn't just come about by itself just because you have decided that it is a good idea to be more aware of things. A strong commitment to working on yourself and enough self-discipline to persevere in the process are essential to developing a strong meditation practice and a high degree of mindfulness... The spirit of engaged commitment we ask of our (students) during their eight weeks in the stress clinic is similar to that required in athletic training... We say to our students, "You don't have to like it; you just have to do it. When the eight weeks are over, then you can tell us whether it was of any use or not. For now just keep practising."

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*

Meditation Posture

- Take your time to find a solid, comfortable, balanced posture.
- If on the floor, sit either cross-legged or kneeling. Use a mat and cushions to support yourself. If sitting on a chair it can help to use a cushion under your feet.
- Let the head, neck and back be aligned. (If in a chair, imagine it's a stool and avoid leaning back). Let the chin drop slightly. Check your alignment during the meditation.
- Open and release the shoulders.
- As though being touched by healing hands, let the feet and belly be soft, the hands and heart be soft, the face, the eyes and mouth be soft. Return to these seven points during the meditation.

FIGURE 2



Notice five things, Russ Harris

Pause for a moment:

1. Look around and notice five things that you can see.
2. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.
3. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your trousers against your legs, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).
4. Finally, do all of the above simultaneously.

Key principles of meditation (SOCK)

1. ***Stillness*** – Allow yourself to rest in stillness, there's nothing to do, nowhere to go. Just sit and rest.
2. ***Observing mind*** – As you sit, observe your moment by moment experience. You might label it, 'thinking', 'worrying', 'this is restlessness', 'this is hunger'. Let yourself simply witness rather than get pulled into thought or action.
3. ***Compassion*** and ***Kindness*** – When you experience physical or emotional discomfort, offer yourself an inner hug. Offer yourself the same words of kindness you'd offer a loved one, 'I can see you struggling', 'I'm here for you', 'Take it easy', 'I care about you', 'This too will pass'

Mindfulness of Breathing, Jon Kabat-Zinn

1. Assume a comfortable posture. Keep the spine straight and let your shoulders drop.
2. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.
3. Bring your attention to the belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the in-breath and fall or recede on the out-breath.
4. Keep the focus on your breathing, 'being with' each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.
5. Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.
6. If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your 'job' is simply to bring it back to the breath every time, no matter what it becomes preoccupied with.
7. Practice this exercise for fifteen minutes at a convenient time every day, whether you feel like it or not, for one week and see how it feels to incorporate a disciplined practice into your life. Be aware of how it feels to spend some time each day just being with your breath without having to do anything.

Setting up Your Practice

WHICH OF THESE SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL FOR YOU? PLEASE TICK THOSE BOXES.

In setting up your practice it can help to have:

- a regular time
- a set place
- a meditation cushion/stool/upright chair
- a timer
- a meditation CD/download an MP3 track onto your computer
- a book of meditation readings or poems

And to:

- warn the people you live with and
- switch off phones

Many people find it useful to have a special meditation table with objects on it that inspire you such as:

- candles
- incense
- a bell
- a photo – someone or something that touches you
- flowers
- a statue
- a leaf
- pebbles
- a piece of drift wood

Resources - Online

www.mindful.org

Endless interesting articles, meditations and links

www.dharmaseed.com

Free to access meditations and meditation talks

www.insighttimer.com

A useful meditation timer with meditations

Coursebooks

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World, Mark Williams

Accessible explanation of mindfulness with a week by week guide to the course

Full Catastrophe Living, Jon Kabat-Zinn

Very comprehensive overview of mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness for Health: A practical guide to relieving pain, reducing stress and restoring wellbeing, Penman and Burch

Additional Reading

The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle

Articulate and readable explanation of how to live in the present moment.

Peace is Every Step, Thich Nhat Hanh

Gentle and inspiring work by Vietnamese Monk and meditation teacher.

The Wisdom of No Escape, Pema Chodron

Down to earth, challenging book, from a very experienced meditation teacher.

The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion, Christopher Germer

A gentle and inspiring self-help book written by experienced therapist and meditator.

Home Practice – Session One

Feel free to adapt these activities to suit you and your week ahead.

1. INTENTION AND SETTING UP A NEW HABIT

- Reflect on what's brought you on the course. You might choose to make a note of this.

What's your intention for the course?

2. MEDITATION

- Find a suitable place in which to meditate. You may want to create a special meditation table.
- Experiment with different times of the day and choose the time that suits you best.
- Meditate every day this week for 15/20 minutes. Keep a record of your practice.

Are you willing to make a commitment to yourself?

I will (action)

At (time)

In (place)*

3. BREATHING SPACE

- A couple of times every day, pause and do the '5 things' breathing space.

When's a good time for you?

Signed:

Session Two – Mindful Living

- Mindful living
- Working with thoughts – PUP
- Washing dishes, Thich Nhat Hanh
- The summer day, Mary Oliver
- Home practice

Think of meditation as planting seeds. You give young seeds the right conditions, but you don't try to dig them up each day to see if they've grown roots. Meditation is like cultivating a garden: your experience deepens and changes, but this takes place in horticultural time, not clock time.

Mark Williams, Finding Peace in a Frantic World

In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few.

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, Shunryu Suzuki

Pick an amount of time that you can really commit to doing every day. It is the everydayness that is going to build the practice.

Joseph Goldstein

When we get too caught up in the busyness of the world, we lose connection with one another - and ourselves.

Jack Kornfield

Mindful Living

(INNCA) Mindfulness is...

- Intentional
- Now (moment by moment) awareness
- Non-judgmental
- Compassionate
- Appropriate

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Everyday Mindfulness

Five steps for practising mindfulness throughout the day:

1. When possible do just one thing at a time.
2. Pay full attention to what you are doing.
3. When your mind wanders from what you are doing, bring it back.
4. Repeat Step 3 several billion times.
5. Investigate your distractions.

Larry Rosenberg

Mindful activities

If you would like to bring more mindfulness into your day-to-day life I suggest you start with just one activity.

1. You could try noticing (choose one) ...

- the experience of drinking a cup of tea/coffee
- eating a piece of fruit
- getting dressed
- the feel of the water in the shower
- brushing your teeth
- the feel and weight of your keys in your hand
- walking up and down stairs

2. How will you remember to do it?

.....

Working with thoughts – PUP

When you're entangled in a thought:

- a. **Pause** (x3)
- b. **Useful?**
 - Useful now? If not let go and return to the...
- c. **Present moment:**
 - the breath
 - the body
 - your surroundings
 - Ask, 'How do I know I'm alive?'

Washing Dishes

To my mind, the idea that doing dishes is unpleasant can occur only when you aren't doing them. Once you are standing in front of the sink with your sleeves rolled up and your hands in the warm water, it is really quite pleasant. I enjoy taking my time with each dish, being fully aware of the dish, the water and each movement of my hands. I know that if I hurry in order to eat dessert sooner, the time of washing dishes will be unpleasant and not worth living. That would be a pity, for each minute, each second of life is a miracle. The dishes themselves and the fact that I am here washing them are miracles!

If I am incapable of washing dishes joyfully, if I want to finish them quickly so I can go and have dessert, I will be equally incapable of enjoying my dessert. With the fork in my hand, I will be thinking about what to do next, and the texture and the flavour of the dessert, together with the pleasure of eating it, will be lost. I will always be dragged into the future, never able to live in the present moment.

Each thought, each action in the sunlight of awareness becomes sacred. In this light, no boundary exists between the sacred and the profane. I must confess it takes me a bit longer to do the dishes, but I live fully in every moment, and I am happy. Washing the dishes is at the same time a means and an end – that is, not only do we do the dishes in order to have clean dishes, we also do the dishes just to do the dishes, to live fully in each moment while washing them.

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*, p26

The Summer Day, Mary Oliver

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean -

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down -

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

Think about something you recently paid intimate attention to. What did you notice?

.....
.....

When do you/did you last allow yourself to feel “idle and blessed”?

.....
.....

Read the last two lines to yourself. What do they say to you? How does it feel in your body to hold those two lines?

.....
.....

Home Practice – Session Two

Keep a record of your practice and do reward yourself.

1. MINDFULNESS

- Choose one simple activity to do mindfully every day this week. Notice and allow yourself to fully experience each facet of the activity.
- Eat one meal mindfully this week. Take your time to notice and enjoy the look, the smell, the feel and taste of your food. Place your fork or spoon on the table after you take each bite. Be conscious of chewing and swallowing.

Which activity will you do?

2. MEDITATION

- Meditate every day this week for 15/20 minutes. Use the script or the dropbox track. If 15 minutes feels too long, what are you willing to commit to daily?
- Notice unhelpful thoughts that arise. Try using 'PUP'.

How long are you willing to meditate everyday; 3 mins/ 5 mins/10 mins/15mins/20mins/more?

3. BREATHING SPACE AND PAUSES

- A couple of times every day do the '5 things' breathing space.
- Pay attention to the small interruptions and delays during your day - red traffic lights, waiting for the kettle to boil or a document to download. Notice where your attention goes. Can you allow them to be opportunities to pause and rest?

What opportunities are there to pause during your day?

Signed:

Date:

Session Three – Mindfulness of the Body

- Conscious breathing, Thich Nhat Hanh
- Body scan meditation, Martine Batchelor
- Healing power of awareness, Mark Williams
- Walking meditation, Jack Kornfield
- Home practice

Our bodies know that they belong; it is our minds that make our lives so homeless.

John O'Donohue

Meditation is not about trying to get anywhere else. It is about allowing yourself to be exactly where you are and as you are, and for the world to be exactly as it is in this moment as well. This is not so easy, since there is always something that we can rightly find fault with if we stay inside our thinking.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

The more systematically and regularly you practice, the more the power of mindfulness will grow and the more it will work for you.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Conscious Breathing

There are a number of breathing techniques you can use to make life vivid and more enjoyable. The first exercise is very simple. As you breathe in, you say to yourself, “Breathing in, I know I am breathing in.” And as you breathe out, say, “Breathing out, I know I am breathing out.” Just that. You recognise your in-breath as an in-breath and your out-breath as an out-breath. You don’t even need to recite the whole sentence; you can just use two words: ‘in’ and ‘out’. This technique can help you keep your mind on your breath. As you practice, your breath will become peaceful and gentle, and your mind and body will also become peaceful and gentle. This is not a difficult exercise. In just a few minutes you can realise the fruit of meditation.

Breathing in and out is very important, and it is enjoyable. Our breathing is the link between our body and our mind. Sometimes our mind is thinking one thing and our body is doing another, and mind and body are not unified. By concentrating on our breathing, ‘in’ and ‘out’, we bring body and mind back together, and become whole again. Conscious breathing is an important bridge.

To me, breathing is a joy that I cannot miss. Every day, I practise conscious breathing, and in my small meditation room, I have calligraphed this sentence, “Breathe, you are alive!” Just breathing and smiling can make us very happy because when we breathe consciously we recover ourselves completely and encounter life in the present moment.

Thich Nhat Hanh , Peace is Every Step, p8

Body Scan Meditation

- Sit as solidly as a mountain and as spaciouly as an ocean.
- First pay attention to sensations in and around the head: on your scalp, your face, inside your skull.
- How does it feel to have a head? Do not imagine or visualise sensations, just observe what is there.
- Move your focus gently to the neck and the shoulders. Watch any sensations without grasping them or rejecting them.
- Now, move the attention to the torso, front and back. Notice the feel of your clothes against your skin.
- Next, take the awareness to the arms and the hands. Feel the contact of your hands with each other or with your knees.
- Expand the focus to the pelvic area, front and back. Experience the contact of your buttocks with the cushion.
- At the level of sensations, where does buttock stop and cushion start? Feel the seamlessness of the experience.
- Move the awareness to the thighs and the knees. If there is any painful sensation, look deeply into the bare experience of it.
- Now focus your attention on the lower part of the legs, the ankles and the feet. Notice how sensations do not remain exactly the same from moment to moment.
- Finally be aware of the whole body. What is the immediate experience of having a body? Feel the actual physicality of it, not what you might imagine it is like.
- Come back to sensations, come back to awareness. Recognise and appreciate the ability to feel, to sense.
- As you end the meditation, rest in quietness and clarity. After you get up, pay gentle attention to sensations as you move and go about your day.

Meditation for Life, Martine Batchelor

The Healing Power of Awareness

One vital inner resource we often ignore or take completely for granted, whether depressed or not, is the body itself. When we get lost in our thoughts and try to jettison our feelings, we pay very little attention to the physical sensations of our bodies. Yet those sensations within the body give us immediate feedback about what's going on in our emotional and mental state. They can give us valuable information in our quest to free ourselves from depression (or stress, pain, fatigue or whatever), and focusing on them not only keeps us out of the mental trap of leaning into the future or getting stuck in the past but can also transform the emotion itself... there is an unsuspected power in inhabiting the moment you're living in right now with full awareness.

We don't only think about things. We also experience them directly through our senses... (This) being mode is an entirely different way of knowing from the thinking of doing mode... Being mode is the antidote to the problems that the doing mode of mind creates. By cultivating the awareness of being mode we can:

- Get out of our heads and learn to experience the world directly, experientially, without the relentless commentary of our thoughts...
- See our thoughts as mental events that come and go in the mind like clouds across the sky instead of taking them literally...
- Start living right here, in each present moment...
- Disengage the autopilot in our heads.
- Sidestep the cascade of mental events that draws us down into depression.
- Stop trying to force life to be a certain way because we're uncomfortable right now.

Williams, Teasdale, Segal and Kabat-Zinn,
The Mindful Way through Depression, pp6 and 46

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation is a valuable practice that you can use alongside sitting meditation or when you feel too agitated or uncomfortable to sit and as a way to integrate mindfulness into your daily life.

Like breathing meditation, walking meditation is a simple and universal practice for developing calm, connectedness and awareness. It can be practised regularly, before or after sitting meditation or any time on its own, such as after a busy day at work or on a lazy Sunday morning. The art of walking meditation is to learn to be aware as you walk, to use the natural movement of walking to cultivate mindfulness and wakeful presence.

Select a quiet place where you can walk comfortably back and forth, indoors or out, about 10 or 30 paces in length. Begin by standing at one end of this 'walking path', with your feet firmly planted on the ground. Let your hands rest easily, wherever they are comfortable. Close your eyes for a moment, centre yourself, and feel your body standing on the earth. Feel the pressure on the bottoms of your feet and the other natural sensations of standing. Then open your eyes and let yourself be present and alert.

Begin by walking slowly. Let yourself walk with a sense of ease and dignity. Pay attention to your body. With each step feel the sensations of lifting your foot and leg off of the earth. Be aware as you place each foot on the earth. Relax and let your walking be easy and natural. Feel each step mindfully as you walk. When you reach the end of your path, pause for a moment. Centre yourself, carefully turn around, pause again so that you can be aware of the first step as you walk back. You can experiment with the speed, walking at whatever pace keeps you most present.

Continue to walk back and forth for ten or twenty minutes or longer. As with the breath in sitting, your mind will wander away many, many times. As soon as you notice this, acknowledge where it went softly: "wandering," "thinking," "hearing," "planning." Then return to feel the next step. Like training the puppy, you will need to come back a thousand times. Whether you have been away for one second or for ten minutes, simply acknowledge where you've been and then come back to being alive here and now with the next step you take.

Jack Kornfield, *A Path with Heart*, p66

Home Practice - Session Three

Notice what 'gets in the way' of being mindful. Don't try to change it but simply track your experience.

1. MEDITATION

- Meditate every day this week for 20/25 minutes. If this feels too long, what are you willing to commit to? (5 mins/ 10 mins/ 15 mins daily?)
- Try alternating, using 'the mindfulness of the breath' one day, and the body scan, the next day.

What obstacles have you been noticing? Can you let them simply be part of the meditation?

2. MINDFULNESS AND MINDFUL WALKING

- Choose one simple activity to do mindfully every day this week. Notice and allow yourself to fully experience each facet of the activity.
- Several times during the week do some walking meditation. Try:
 - walking in a park or along a river
 - walking mindfully to your car in the morning, or
 - walking mindfully when you go up or down stairs

How will you remember to do this?

3. BREATHING SPACE AND PAUSES

- A couple of times every day do a breathing space. Try alternating between; '5 things' and 'Conscious breathing'.
- Pay attention to the small interruptions and delays during your day - red traffic lights, waiting for the kettle to boil or a document to download. Notice where your attention goes. Can you allow them to be opportunities to pause and rest?

Each time you pause, take time to acknowledge it and reward yourself. How will you remember to do this?

Signed:

Date:

HOME PRACTICE – SESSION ...

Day	Exercise	Done?	Comments and observations
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

SESSION ...

Day	Exercise	Done?	Comments and observations
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

SESSION ...

Day	Exercise	Done?	Comments and observations
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

