

Mindful Muscles: An innovative education project to tackle doping use in recreational sport and fitness



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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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Introduction/ Background

Athletes in recreational sport do not receive the same attention and have far more limited access to learning resources when it comes to anti-doping education, as compared to elite athletes [1]. The existing anti-doping education resources for recreational sport athletes are based on relevant practices in elite sport focusing on a deficit-based educational model fixed on athletes' weaknesses, or lack of skills.

Objectives

Project Mindful Muscles (MM) provide recreational sport athletes and related professionals with a novel, strengths-based approach, based on mindfulness, self-compassion, acceptance, and values (MASC) [2-3] which will enable athletes in recreational sport to effectively cope with situations that may increase their personal risk for doping.

Materials and Methods

(i) Systematic literature review and report on best practices of self-administered MASC applications / interventions in substance use and body image disorders, to developed MASC resources, (ii) consultation with practitioners, (iii) consultation with expert academics, (iv) formative evaluation of the Mindful Muscles workbook with 350 exercisers 18-25 years-old across the 7 partnership European countries involved in the project (Portugal, UK, Greece, Estonia, Finland, Serbia and Netherlands), and (v) development of a Practitioner's Manual for integrating MASC approaches in their practice – especially those working with steroid and other IPEDs users.

Results

The findings obtained in stages i, ii and iii supported the development of a framework for developing MASC resources for the primary and secondary prevention of PEDs (4 modules including different types of MASC exercises) (Fig.1). The findings also informed the content and approach of the Mindful Muscles intervention, and the implications of using strengths-based and positive approaches to doping prevention.

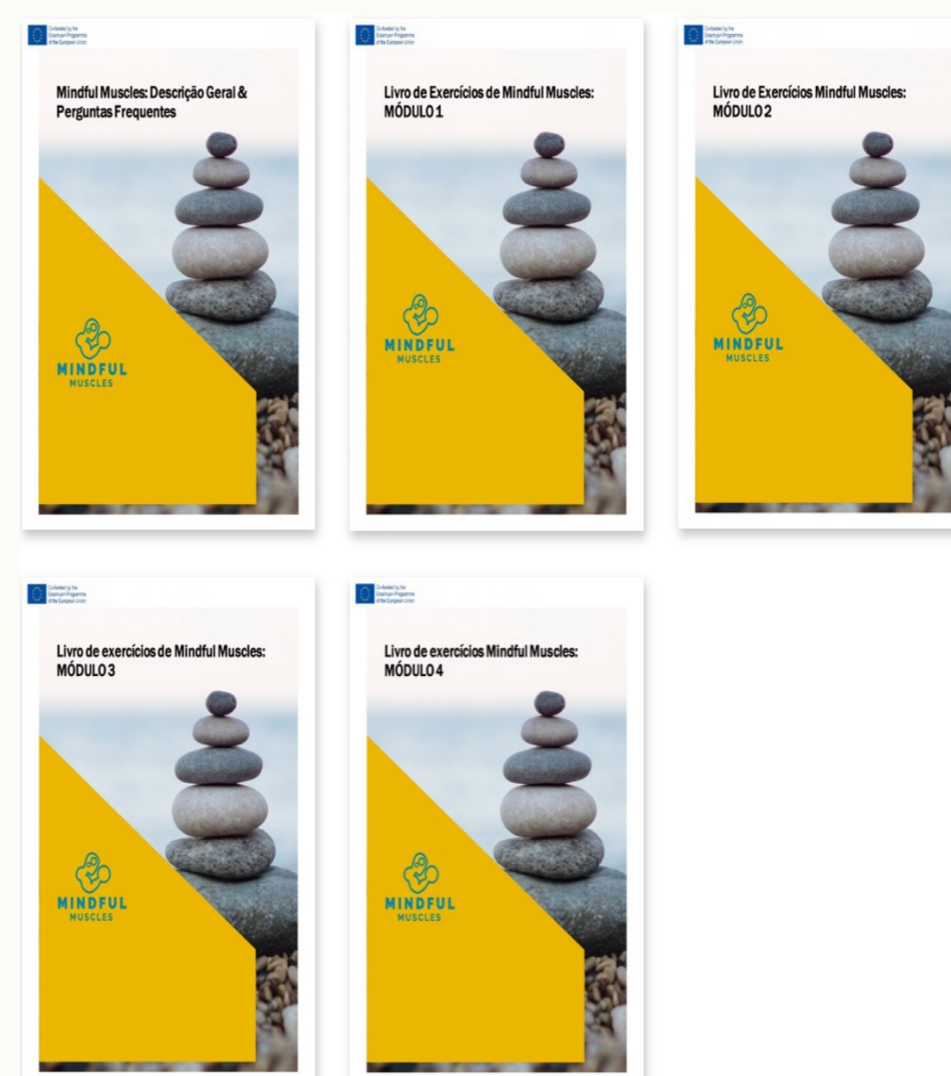


Figure 1. MASC modules



<https://mindfulmuscles.org/resources-for-exercisers-and-athletes-portugues/>

Discussion and Conclusion

The MM model, addresses dysfunctional thoughts about body image and athletic performance, taking perspective over exercising, sport performance, and body ideals. Developing positive self-talk skills and helping exercisers realise that their mental strengths and their values for doing sport by addressing negative self-criticism and adopt a more positive and acceptive view of the (physical & psychological) self are the most important. The project Mindful Muscles is the first multifaceted, international psycho-educational intervention to tackle doping use among amateur athletes and exercisers, which resources have the potential to inspire users to improve their lives not just in the sport arena, but also to other important life domains.

References

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Support:

This work was partially supported by FCT/MCTES (UIDB/05608/2020 and UIDP/05608/2020) – H&TRC.

