

# Euro Health Care and Fitness Summit

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## Mindful movement-Physical activity that facilitates the realization of the mind

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The relationship between physical activity (PA) and mental health (MH) is complex and intriguing, fairly more than the relationship between PA and physical health. While dose-response has heuristic value relative to the physiology of exercise, it fails to account for the cognitive and emotional experiences of the individual who performs the activity. Moreover, PA can facilitate positive MH outcomes (particularly regarding stress-management and mood-elevation) even in the absence of quantifiable physiological changes. Further, there is reason to believe that enjoyment and motivation are key factors in reaching the documented positive MH outcomes of PA participation. It makes a difference whether we move just for fun or because we have to, and how we move is even more a crucial factor. Building on these observations, the concept of mindful movement was proposed as a potential remedy for stress-based MH problems and self-esteem issues. Succinctly, when PA takes the form of mindful movement, one consciously experiences the movements of one's body and is deliberately present in the moment of the movement, as if one becomes one's own observer. Mindful movement promotes the experience of the powerful body-mind connection, which allows for greater well-being and life satisfaction, but it also helps clarifying what mindfulness is not. Currently, a cloud of confusion surrounding mindfulness holds the danger of exacerbating mental restlessness in individuals who hunt the wrong goal. Mindfulness is not about getting anywhere else, but about being where you are and knowing it. Thus, mindfulness is not the perfect escape from the hassles of daily living, but rather a way to live more wisely, so that the hassles of daily living do not get the best of us. Understanding this essential truth and the fine difference in meaning without the support of the body-mind connection, is quite a challenge. Hence, the existing risk that a popular trend aiming to promote psychological well-being could bring on more mental and emotional disturbances among the most vulnerable individuals. This oral presentation will take the audience on an exciting journey in the world of mindful movement, from its origins to an ideal future where being consciously present in the body and paying effortless attention to what is within and without, represent the normality, a future in which acceptance, harmony and self-actualization are natural-, rather than utopian features of mankind.

### Biography

Melinda Asztalos has completed 12 years University education including Master in Kinesiology and Revalidation Sciences/Specialization in Rheumatological Rehabilitation (1999, University of Oradea), Master-after-Master in European Physical Education and PhD in Sport- and Movement Sciences/Exercise Psychology (2010, Ghent University). As a hired expert, she provided scientific advise for health policy development at the Flemish Health Ministry. Her research and publications explore the various facets of the relationship between physical activity and mental health.

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