



# OPTIMAL GAME

HEALTH, MINDSET & PERFORMANCE  
NEWSLETTER FOR PROFESSIONAL TENNIS  
PLAYERS & COACHES

APRIL, 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Mindfulness Awareness Month
2. Common Stressors + De-stress Menu
3. How To Develop A Better Stress Mindset
4. Managing Stress
5. Mindfulness Practice
6. Download Talkspace Go
7. Stress Awareness Month: April Calendar
8. Live Classes In April
9. Mental Fitness Tip Of The Month
10. Ask Damon Anything
11. Go To Book List

**SURVEY: TELL US WHAT YOU WANT**



# STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

“AWARENESS IS THE GREATEST AGENT FOR CHANGE”  
– EKHART TOLLE



# STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

**April is Stress Awareness Month**, a great reminder to prioritize your well-being and support those around you. While we can't always avoid stressful situations, we can take steps to manage our reactions, build coping strategies, and practice self-care to protect our mental and physical health. As professional athletes and coaches, you're no strangers to the pressures of performance, travel, and the demands of your sport. In addition, the constant uncertainty and ever-changing nature of competition, rankings, and career trajectories can add an extra layer of stress. Managing stress effectively is key to maintaining not only your physical health but also your emotional well-being. Recognizing and adapting to change, while handling uncertainty, can help you stay resilient and continue to perform at your best.

**As part of our commitment to your well-being, we encourage you to take advantage of your Talkspace benefit this month.**

# COMMON STRESSORS ON TOUR



## Fatigue & Physical Overload

The constant travel, training, and competition can lead to physical exhaustion, making it harder to maintain peak performance and recover properly.



## Performance Anxiety

The pressure to perform at your best, both for yourself and your fans, can create a constant state of worry and anxiety, especially before big matches or tournaments.



## Loneliness from Being Away from Friends and Family

The travel schedule can isolate players from their loved ones, leading to feelings of loneliness, especially during long tours or off-season breaks.



## Harassment & Uncertainty

In today's digital landscape, particularly amid ongoing uncertainty, online harassment and negative commentary can be profoundly distressing. When players are exposed to criticism or hostility, it adds a significant emotional burden to the already intense pressures of professional competition and undermines overall well-being.



## Financial Insecurity

For some players, the uncertainty of earnings, sponsorship deals, and career longevity can create stress about their financial future.



## Burnout from Overtraining

Players and coaches can easily fall into the trap of pushing themselves too hard physically and mentally, leading to exhaustion, lack of motivation, and even injury.

# DAILY DE-STRESSORS



## Talk to Friends and Family

Socializing and spending time with loved ones for emotional support can be a great distraction that helps you decompress after work. Spending quality time with the people you care for lets you connect, process emotions, and gain new perspectives.



## Take Breaks During Your Day

Be aware of what causes your stress and take breaks during your day. Taking short breaks can recharge you and reduce stress levels.



## Journal

Journaling is an excellent coping tool that promotes mental health and relieves stress and anxiety. When you write in a journal, you can process emotions, let go of negativity, and gain new perspectives. Journaling as a regular practice can be an effective way to unwind after a stressful day on the courts.



## Engage in Fun Activities

Engaging in fun activities can provide a much-needed break from work-related worries while strengthening social bonds. According to studies, people who partake in leisure activities have lower stress levels and better stress-management skills.



## Mindfulness Meditation

Bring awareness to the present moment, ease your mind, and promote relaxation. De-stressing after a long day with meditation is a proven practice that reduces stress, increases focus, and supports mental well-being. Combine meditation for stress with deep breathing exercises to further reduce stress hormone levels.



## Consider Online Therapy

Seeking professional help through therapy can allow you to develop coping strategies for managing stress. Online stress therapy makes the process as easy as possible — it's convenient, affordable, and effective. A licensed therapist can share effective stress management techniques.

# HOW TO DEVELOP A BETTER STRESS MINDSET

**READ DR. CRUM'S ARTICLE ON STRESS**

**TAKE DR. CRUM'S STRESS MINDSET TEST**

“What we believe will happen can have surprisingly strong effects on what does happen. Our mindsets shape what we attend to, how we interpret events, and how we react, all of which can change how our bodies respond to situations.”

- Dr. Alia Crum, Stanford Mind/Body Lab

MANAGING STRESS WORKSHEET

# MANAGING STRESS

SPONSORED BY **Talkspace**



Mindfulness Guide

Mindfulness Therapy Worksheet

# MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

SPONSORED BY **Talkspace**

# DOWNLOAD TALKSPACE GO!

[Apple App Store](#)

[Google Play](#)

Use code

**PTPAplayers**

during sign up.



# STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

While we can't always avoid stressful situations, we can take steps to manage our reactions, build coping strategies, and practice self-care to protect our mental and physical health.

## STRESS AWARENESS CALENDAR



## April

STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	<b>1</b> ★ This <b>Stress Awareness Month</b> , remember that managing stress is an ongoing journey—finding what works best for you may take some trial and error.	<b>2</b> 📅 Log on for a workshop in real-time. Today we'll address <b>Healing from childhood wounds</b> at 8:00 PM EST. No registration necessary. Just drop in.	<b>3</b> ✍️ Work stress is common, but understanding its root causes empowers you to adopt healthier coping strategies. <b>Here are 11 tips</b> to help you unwind.	<b>4</b> ✂️ Explore different stress-relief techniques like deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery to find what helps you feel calm and centered.
<b>7</b> 📅 Log on for a workshop in real-time. Today we'll address <b>Making Mindfulness Easy</b> at 8:00 PM EST. No registration necessary. Just drop in.	<b>8</b> 💡 Healing is a journey—if you're struggling, know that support is available. Prioritizing your mental well-being through therapy, self-care, or talking to a trusted person can make a difference.	<b>9</b> 🌱 Practice saying no when needed. Setting clear boundaries helps protect your well-being and prevent overwhelm.	<b>10</b> ✍️ Even the most solid relationships will face challenges from time to time. In <b>this article</b> , explore how to cope with relationship stress.	<b>11</b> ★ Celebrate <b>World Breathing Day</b> by embracing the power of your breath! A few deep breaths can bring clarity, calm, and a boost to your mental well-being.
<b>14</b> 💡 Dedicate a few moments each day to mindfulness. Simply focus on your breath, and gently refocus whenever your mind drifts.	<b>15</b> 📅 Log on for a workshop in real-time. Today we'll address <b>Creating Daily Mindfulness Practices</b> at 8:00 PM EST. No registration necessary. Just drop in.	<b>16</b> ✂️ Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations to boost your mindset and well-being.	<b>17</b> ✍️ In "Men and Stress: A Silent Struggle," explore how stress is a natural part of life, yet many men silently struggle with its impact. <b>Read more here.</b>	<b>18</b> ★ It's <b>Tax Day!</b> Take a mental health break—acknowledge the stress, practice self-care, and celebrate your progress in managing both finances and well-being.
<b>21</b> ✂️ Take 5 minutes to focus on your breath in a quiet space. It's a simple way to clear your mind and reduce stress.	<b>22</b> ✍️ Navigating stress caused by microaggressions can be tough. <b>This article</b> offers strategies for identifying and addressing these situations effectively.	<b>23</b> 📅 Log on for a workshop in real-time. Today we'll address <b>Being a Mindful Coworker</b> at 8:00 PM EST. No registration necessary. Just drop in.	<b>24</b> ✂️ Engage in regular physical activity, such as walking, jogging, or yoga, to release endorphins and reduce stress.	<b>25</b> ★ <b>Happy Administrative Professionals Day!</b> Celebrate by taking a moment for yourself—your well-being is key to your success!
<b>28</b> 📅 Log on for a workshop in real-time. Today we'll address <b>Navigating Conflict at Work</b> at 8:00 PM EST. No registration necessary. Just drop in.	<b>29</b> 💡 Show yourself compassion during tough times, just as you would for a close friend.	<b>30</b> ✂️ Close out <b>Stress Awareness Month</b> with mindful walking—slow, focused steps to ease stress and find calm in the present moment.		

★ Celebration ✍️ Blog post 🌱 Reminder 💡 Tip ✂️ Exercise

Talkspace

Mon, Apr 7, 8:00 PM EDT

Making Mindfulness Easy

Tue, Apr 15, 8:00 PM EDT

Creating Daily Mindfulness Practices

# LIVE CLASSES IN APRIL

SPONSORED BY **Talkspace**

# MENTAL FITNESS TIP OF THE MONTH

## BE AWARE OF GOOD STRESS VS BAD STRESS

Both good and bad stress can cause your body to secrete certain hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones can cause a racing heart, rapid breathing, sweaty hands, and butterflies in your stomach, among other things.

Known by mental health professionals as ***eustress*** and ***distress***, the two types of stress can have different effects on you.

**Eustress, or good stress**, typically has a positive effect and gives you an upbeat outlook. This type of stress might even encourage you to feel motivated and enthusiastic about making a change in your life.

***Good stress*** can often leave you **feeling energized** and able to overcome adversity, illness, or anything challenging that comes your way.

**Distress**, on the other hand, is what most of us think about when we talk about stress. It's that overwhelming, anxiety-inducing, nerve-racking form of stress that can leave you **feeling debilitated** and unable to focus, complete tasks, or face challenges.

Source: [\*\*Elizabeth Keohan, LCSW-C\*\*](#)

### GOOD STRESS

- (Typically) doesn't last long
- Short term state to help you accomplish goals
- You feel in control of the tasks you take on
- Helps you learn new skills / perform optimally

### SOME GOOD STRESS EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- An upcoming match
- Going on a first date
- Buying a new house
- Starting new relationship (doubles partner / coach)
- Goal-directed behaviors / learning new skills

### BAD STRESS

- (Generally) not short term
- Chronic and draining
- Impacts your quality of life
- Stops you from accomplishing your goals
- Can't recover
- Live in a constant state of threat

### SOME BAD STRESS EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Relationship strain / abuse
- Consistent high-pressure with never-ending demand
- Loneliness / cyberbullying
- Financial difficulty/ insecurity
- Unaddressed mental or physical health conditions



DAMON VALENTINO  
PTPA MENTAL FITNESS DIRECTOR



Just as elite athletes in other major professional sports have access to world-class mental performance training, pro tennis players should be empowered with easy access to mental performance resources that are available anywhere in the world at any time.



# ASK DAMON ANYTHING

## Q & A from a player

Q: "I know that stress is part of the game, but sometimes it feels overwhelming, especially before big matches. **How can I manage stress in a way that doesn't hinder my performance?**"

A: "That's a great question, and you're absolutely right—stress can feel overwhelming- but **it doesn't have to control you**. The first step is understanding that **stress is not inherently bad**. It's your body's **natural response to a challenge**, and when you learn to **reframe it, stress can become a powerful ally**. One of the key strategies is learning how to **regulate your nervous system** through techniques like **deep breathing, mindful awareness & spending time with friends / family**. These tools help you **center & connect yourself** and bring your focus **back to the present moment**, instead of being distracted by the 'what-ifs' or past mistakes.

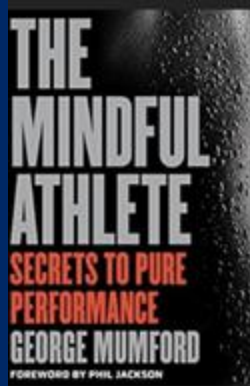
Another key approach is to **shift your mindset** around stress. Instead of seeing it as something to avoid, recognize that stress can signal that you're **ready for the challenge**. It's a sign that you're pushing your boundaries and growing. **Embrace it, use it to sharpen your focus, and channel that energy into action**. It's all about **creating a relationship with stress** where you **control it**, instead of it controlling you.

## SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION

# YOUR GO TO BOOK LIST

Resources to dig deeper into  
this month's content.

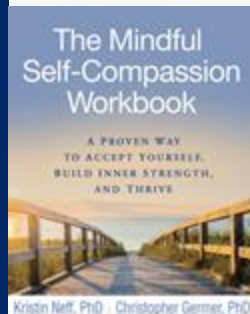
[The Mindful Athlete](#)



With a charismatic teaching style that combines techniques of engaged mindfulness with lessons from popular culture icons such as Yoda, Indiana Jones, and Bruce Lee, Mumford tells illuminating stories about his larger than life clients. His writing is down-to-earth and easy to understand and apply. *The Mindful Athlete* is an engrossing story and an invaluable resource for anyone looking to elevate their game, no matter what the pursuit, and includes a foreword by Phil Jackson.

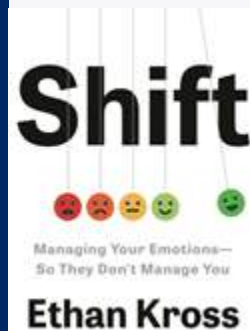


Are you kinder to others than you are to yourself? More than a thousand research studies show the benefits of being a supportive friend to yourself, especially in times of need. This science-based workbook offers a step-by-step approach to breaking free of harsh self-judgments and impossible standards in order to cultivate emotional well-being. In a convenient large-size format, the book is based on the authors' groundbreaking eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) program, which has helped tens of thousands of people worldwide.



[The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook](#)

*Shift* weaves groundbreaking research with riveting stories of people struggling and succeeding to manage their emotions—from a mother whose fear prompted her to make a spur-of-the-moment decision that would save her daughter's life mid-flight to a nuclear code-carrying Navy SEAL who learned how to embrace both joy and pain during a hellish training activity. Dr. Kross spotlights a wide array of tools that we already have access to—in our bodies and minds, our relationships with other people, and the cultures and physical spaces we inhabit—and shows us how to harness them to be healthier and more successful.



[Shift](#)



# DO YOU HAVE CONTENT IDEAS?

**TELL US WHAT YOU WANT  
(CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY)**

## **WANT SOME SUPPORT?**

### **CONTACT:**

DAMON VALENTINO

PTPA DIRECTOR OF MENTAL FITNESS

[damon.valentino@ptpaplayers.com](mailto:damon.valentino@ptpaplayers.com)

+1-415-515-9630 (WhatsApp)

