



MENTAL FIT PATH

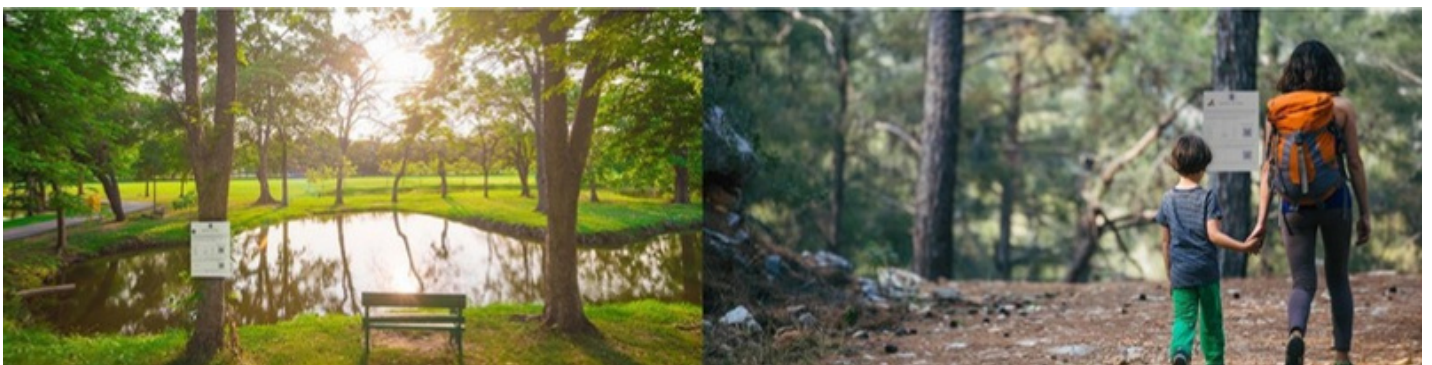
The Mental Fit Path is an innovative concept designed to promote mental health, physical activity, and social cohesion. In a time when especially young people are facing increasing mental challenges, the Mental Fit Path offers an accessible, inspiring, and practical learning experience aimed at strengthening resilience, self-efficacy, and motivation.

Background

The Mental Fit Path was developed in Austria during the COVID-19 pandemic by Mario Kozuh-Schneeberger. At a time when movement, connection, and mental strength were particularly important, he wanted to create a way for people of all ages to strengthen both body and mind – freely accessible, inspiring, and playful.

What exactly is the Mental Fit Path?

The Mental Fit Path is an interactive exercise trail consisting of eight weatherproof boards installed in public or semi-public spaces (e.g., schoolyards, parks, youth centers). Each board features an age-appropriate physical exercise and a QR code linking to a short video clip. In these videos, inspiring individuals – often well-known athletes – share their own strategies for overcoming mental challenges.





MENTAL FIT PATH

How does the path work in practice?

Participants follow the boards along a freely accessible route. Each station conveys a mental message as well as a physical activation. The digital video content can be easily accessed via any smartphone and provides authentic, motivating impulses for everyday life.

The content is intentionally brief, tailored to the target audience, honest, and relatable. Each of the eight boards presents an athlete from the Mental Fit Path and combines a personal mental message with a simple exercise that anyone can try. By scanning the QR codes, visitors can access the videos, which connect movement and mental strength in an inspiring way.

Mental Fit Path

MAINSPONSOR

Käpt'n



example athlete

Country





Here you find the introduction of the athlete – including name, origin, and sporting background. The text highlights the values this person represents: mental strength, discipline, and inspiration – in sport and in life.

Mental Tip

Here you find the athlete's personal message. They share how to stay motivated, overcome challenges, and push beyond personal limits – in a short, inspiring video.

Scan the QR code





Exercise

Heroes:
1-3 rep

Warrior:
5-8 rep

Champion:
10-15 rep



Scan the QR code



Coaches

Coaches

Coaches

Coaches

National Partner

Main Sponsor

Coaches

Coaches

Coaches

for country: www.projekt-handschlag.com

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The main sponsor is placed at the top center of the board, while additional sponsors and supporters, together with the national partner, are listed along the bottom edge to make their support clearly visible.

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What role do the athletes play?

The athletes are the heart of the Mental Fit Path. They are well-known sportsmen and sportswomen who have faced and overcome challenges in their lives – whether on the slopes, in the stadium, on the mountain, or in everyday life. They know what it means to reach their limits and rise again. They voluntarily and without compensation share their experiences and personalities, motivated by the desire to pass on their mental strength to children and young people.

Each path has a captain of the “path team.” Their role is to support the local implementation, represent the team in public, and strengthen the team spirit among the participating athletes. This brings the idea of collective action to life – a team playing for the mental strength of children and young people.



Target Groups and Impact Goals

The Mental Fit Path is primarily aimed at children, adolescents, and young adults, but it is suitable for people of all ages. It promotes:

- Physical activity through simple exercises that can be done anywhere
- Mental strength through practical strategies for self-confidence, mindfulness, and resilience
- Self-efficacy and motivation through role models who have overcome mental challenges and share their experiences openly
- Inclusion and community by involving para-athletes and encouraging open dialogue about mental well-being in public spaces



MENTAL FIT PATH

The Mental Fit Path in the Education System

During the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the responsibility fell on the shoulders of educators. They not only had to teach, but also inspire courage, foster optimism, and strengthen social cohesion. During this time, many teachers expressed the desire to integrate movement and mental strength more deeply into everyday school life. This is exactly where the Mental Fit Path comes in. It is particularly popular in and around schools and educational institutions because it offers a simple, practical tool to raise awareness about mental health and to combine two key health components – the joy of movement and mental well-being.

The boards illustrate the three developmental stages – “Hero,” “Fighter,” and “Master” – in a playful, educational style that motivates children and adolescents in an age-appropriate way to connect physical activity with mental strength.

Through online access, teachers can also use the athletes’ video messages directly in the classroom to bring topics such as self-confidence, motivation, or mindfulness to life.

The athletes, as well-known role models, help raise awareness among children and young people about mental health and spark their interest in the topic. Teachers can build on this impulse and explore it further according to their students’ needs.

Experiences in Austria have shown that it was often teachers and schools who, after successfully using the concept in their classrooms, brought the initiative to their communities. In cooperation with cities and municipalities, additional Mental Fit Paths have since been created – on hiking trails and in public spaces. Teachers continue to play a key role in the project, providing feedback, suggesting new locations, and helping to spread the concept further.

Operational Implementation Through National Partners

A key element in the Europe-wide rollout is the involvement of national implementation partners. They ensure that the Mental Fit Path functions effectively within the specific national or regional context. As exclusive social franchise partners, they work closely with the project team to develop tailored strategies for introducing and expanding the Mental Fit Path in their country or region. Their main tasks include selecting and engaging athletes, identifying suitable local partners and supporters, and coordinating the distribution of the paths.

In return, they receive a fair and transparent franchise model, continuous support from the international project team, and access to the growing network of European Mental Health Paths.



MENTAL FIT PATH

Funding and Support for the Mental Fit Paths

The Mental Fit Path thrives on the commitment of the project teams and athletes, as well as the backing of its sponsors and partners. This works because everyone shares the same goal: to promote the joy of movement, mental strength, and community for all.

Through their financial and organizational support, sponsors and partners make it possible to establish new paths in schools, clubs, youth centers, parks, or along hiking trails—places open to everyone, especially children and young people who are not just part of society, but its future.

Funding for the Mental Fit Paths is based on a social impact business model that enables national partners to act sustainably and autonomously within a clear framework. Any surplus generated from implementation is reinvested in local social projects, creating synergies and multiplier effects that significantly increase the social return on investment for all involved.

A Project with Potential

The development of the Mental Fit Path in Austria demonstrates the concept's strong potential.

After the first implementations in 2021 in Linz, Tyrol, and Burgenland, the project grew rapidly. In the first year alone, 200 paths were established, and the 500 mark was surpassed in the second year. Today, there are around 680 paths in Austria, which have already reached more than 50,000 people. In 2022, the first international implementation followed with Handballcampus München and the first Mental Fit Path in Germany.

Since then, the project has continued to grow—driven by the conviction that movement, encounter, and appreciation form the foundation of mental strength. Mental strength emerges when people move, meet, and encourage one another.

Contact

Whether as a national implementation partner, supporter, educational institution, or sponsor: the Mental Fit Path invites you to become part of a growing movement for mental health and social cohesion. Contact us without obligation at kontakt@projekt-handschlag.com.

Impressum

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