

# Sunday, June 8, 2025 - Discussion Topic - "Practice" In Relation To Pain, Pleasure, and Happiness

**Post by "Cassius" of June 4, 2025 at 12:49 PM**

In this current week's Lucretius Today Podcast (released June 3, 2025), we read an interesting section of Tusculan Disputations in which Cicero discussed the usefulness of "practice" or "exercise" or "experience" in handling pain - certainly bodily pain, at least. In this section he did not specifically criticize the Epicurean position, and the position I took in the podcast was that the Epicureans would likely have agreed with Cicero's point, which was largely to the effect that practicing certain types of exercise or other experiences can help prepare you to deal with pain when it arrives.

The section that has the most of this from **14-17**. I won't quote the full thing here, but let's use this particular text as the starting off point, because it talks specifically about training from youth, exercise, past exposure to pains, etc:

[Tusculan Disputations 2.14](#)

At the very least, there are parallels here with Epicurus saying to Menoeceus that

Quote

[131] To grow accustomed therefore to simple and not luxurious diet gives us health to the full, and makes a man alert for the needful employments of life, and when after long intervals we approach luxuries disposes us better towards them, and fits us to be fearless of fortune.

This very likely has relation also to the issue of "condensing" pleasure as discussed in Chapter 10 section 11 of DeWitt's book.

My suggestion is that we discuss the issue of "practicing" in regard to how we deal with pain and pleasure. It's probably valid to discuss "practicing pleasure," but maybe we should start with a discussion of whether to view diet, exercise, "working out," "fasting," and like less-than-pleasant activities as practices to enhance happy living.

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**Post by "Kalosyni" of June 6, 2025 at 9:15 AM**

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

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I hope that Cicero's slight wafting scent of "stoic" virtue-signaling (put forward as a remedy) will be addressed. 😊

It is one thing to be clear about the true nature of pain: short if severe, but still able to feel other pleasures when weak pain is present. And it is a very different (un-Epicurean) notion to "train" your body in a type of "exercise boot-camp".

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## Post by "Cassius" of June 6, 2025 at 9:26 AM

### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And it is a very different (un-Epicurean) notion to "train" your body in a type of "exercise boot-camp".

I have to disagree with that conclusion as stated. As we know there were many Roman military men who were Epicurean, and if they had become generals without military exercises I suspect their detractors would point that out. There's also no general accusation that the ancient Epicureans were grossly overweight, out-of-condition, or otherwise overindulged. Avoiding the harms of overindulgence that hold back the mind and body would be, as Jefferson said to Short, *"the farthest of all things from the happiness which the well-regulated indulgences of Epicurus ensure."*

In addition, there are many modern variations of "exercise boot camps" that help train the body for endurance and performance, and I definitely see no reason an Epicurean would not participate in them. In fact, to the opposite, I think it's inherent in Epicurean philosophy that you want both a sound mind AND a sound body and that you are going to put in the time and effort required to improve and safeguard both. This is the only life you have, after all, and you don't want it shortened or held back by unnecessary physical problems any more than you want mental problems.

### Quote

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4482-sunday-june-8-2025-discussion-topic-practice-in-relation-to-pain-pleasure-and-ha/>

I take the liberty of observing that you are not a true disciple of our master Epicurus, in indulging the indolence to which you say you are yielding. One of his canons, you know, was that “that indulgence which prevents a greater pleasure, or produces a greater pain, is to be avoided.” Your love of repose will lead, in its progress, to a suspension of healthy exercise, a relaxation of mind, an indifference to everything around you, and finally to a debility of body, and hebetude of mind, the farthest of all things from the happiness which the well-regulated indulgences of Epicurus ensure; fortitude, you know is one of his four cardinal virtues. That teaches us to meet and surmount difficulties; not to fly from them, like cowards; and to fly, too, in vain, for they will meet and arrest us at every turn of our road.