



QT2 Coach - Mental Fitness Guide

Understanding mental fitness is the key to unlocking an athlete's proven physical fitness and performance metrics. All QT2 coaches should review the Mental Fitness presentation on the coach reference, AND utilize the following tools with their athletes. QT2 Coaches are expected to optimize mental fitness for performance, NOT to work with mental health. Suspected mental health issues should be referred to a psychologist.

Confidence

- Use positive reinforcement with your athletes
- Have your athletes think and act confidently – eventually becomes reality
- Discuss pressure and separate self imposed pressures
- Learn from bad days. Have distinct answers for your athletes after bad days that remove doubt. Successful athletes realize that you must have bad days to improve.
- Use confidence building worksheet with athletes when needed.

Imagery

- Explain coping imagery
- Explain best performance imagery
- Explain success imagery

Self talk

- Have athletes develop a script using
- Have athletes use cue words for different scenarios
- Make sure athletes do not use past thinking--stay task relevant

Energy Control

- Discuss the inverted U concept
- Have athletes use cue words to control energy level
- Have athletes picture flat and over energized starts to understand optimal energy
- Develop training sessions that give the pressure of race day

Focus

- Ask what they will focus on for each sport before race day
- Ask how focus was following the race, and attempt to access covert thinking – “what were you thinking when....?”
- Use focus plan worksheet with athletes when needed before big events

Use 750 word and 250 word strength building exercises when “toughness” appears to be a limiter (common with “choking”).

750: Paper discussing why you are not tough enough. What forces have been blocking personal growth? Address:

- Too much stress or too little
- What have influence of parents, coach, school, brothers, sisters had on developing your toughness?
- Have you had it too easy, or too hard?
- Is excessive pressure a problem, and if so, where is it coming from?
 - If this is self-generated, why is the potential fear of failure so devastating?
- What makes your REAL SELF so fragile, so threatened by failure?



Facing personal truth and understanding it is the key to making progress. Both the coach and athlete can gain tremendous understanding of where the mental limiters are and why they exist.

250: Paper discussing why you aren't more disciplined in your thinking, imaging, and acting skills during competition. The insights gained here can help both the athlete and coach take action to fix deficiencies.

All QT2 coaches should explain each of these five areas to their athletes within 8 weeks of startup. Depending on assessed mental fitness need, coaches shall utilize worksheets and other tools discussed above as needed. Consider referral to the USOC Athlete's Guide to Mental Training and/or the "New Toughness Training for Sports" by James E. Loehr. If assessed mental fitness is beyond mitigation by the coach, the athlete should be referred to Dr. Endlich (QT2 partner psychologist).