

PERFORMANCE POINT

MENTAL PERFORMANCE

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Purpose, Drive and Motivation

Many of you are coming off your summer competition schedule and World Championships, while others are heading toward the start of your competitive season. Wherever you are in your performance cycle, motivation is a critical part of mental toughness, which can be challenged from time to time. A lull in motivation doesn't reflect negatively on you as an athlete, given you love what you do. Highs and lows in motivation become a reality for most athletes and coaches due to physical and mental fatigue through long seasons, the daily monotony of training, when competition pressure is relentless or an injury occurs. So what can you do to stay on top of your motivation in terms of the quality of your daily training, performance testing or competition preparation?

As defined by Jones, et al. (2001) (see 2009 Performance Point *What is this thing called Mental Toughness?*), motivation is the insatiable desire and one's internalized motivation to succeed as well as the ability to bounce back from performance setbacks with an increased determination to succeed. Whether you are heading into a training period or competition, remembering 'why you do this' or 'what gets you out of bed in the morning' can fuel the insatiable desire and internal motivation – especially during those times when you may not feel like getting out of bed or up for another race, game or contest. Although motivation can be linked to external factors (like your coach's, teammates' or others' expectations, money or funding, etc.), considering the volume, frequency and intensity of most training programs and competition schedules, finding the motivation from within (your enjoyment, passion, sense of pride and satisfaction) are key factors to keep you going and bring greater success.

Considering your internal motivation and what really drives you, can also help you avoid falling in to the rut of 'just going through the motions'. The quality of your daily training is key to sustaining successful performance, but there is always the risk of not getting everything out of each session especially as you get tired (you know, those times when you finish a session and you can't really remember what you just did, or when you roll up to training only because you know you have to be there). There is plenty of evidence now from sport psychology research that demonstrates the positive relationship between having goals (and the achievement of goals) and motivation.



PHOTO: KEVIN LIGHT, NATIONAL TEAM ROWER

To maintain your motivation, regularly remind yourself of why you are doing this and what your key outcome goals are for the season; then remember what your specific performance goals are, such as testing, so you are prepared and get the most out of every 'testing/measured performance' opportunity. Finally, take time each day to consider what you want to get out of training or even the specific session or skill you are about to do; your process goals.

The following page contains a template of a daily training sheet which you can modify to make sport-specific to suit your needs. While completing this form, ask yourself before each session 'what do I want to get out of this?' and at the end of the session/day 'how did it go'; to create purpose and intent in your training and ultimately, competition (see Performance Point *Goal Setting 101* for more information on different types of goals). For an editable version of the daily training sheet, please click [here](#) to download the Word document.

Goal setting is about having a vision and supporting your vision with action. By setting goals you will give yourself direction and clarity. Knowing what you are trying to achieve session by session can relieve boredom, introduce challenge and improve the quality of your training, not to mention ensure regular improvement which can instill a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction.

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DAILY TRAINING GOALS

DATE:

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MEASUREMENT

YOUR 'SCORE' AND COMMENTS/NOTES

Resting Heart Rate Take your resting heart rate before you get out of bed

HR =

How did I sleep? Terrible Awesome
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How did I feel when I woke up? Terrible Awesome
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

TRAINING

am

What is the session?

What do I want to achieve?

How did it go?

pm

What is the session?

What do I want to achieve?

How did it go?

End of the day: Terrible Awesome
How do I feel in general? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

What do I want to work on tomorrow?