



Tips for Mental Toughness

Thriving when the going gets tough

1 You are not the only one feeling this way

It's easy to feel isolated when experiencing emotions like nervousness, frustration, or confusion. However, it's important to remember that those around you often feel similar emotions, even if they express them differently. One effective way to reduce the intensity of these feelings is to share them with a peer. Simply saying, "I'm feeling [emotion]," can help dissipate the emotion, allowing you to move forward. Remember, you are not alone in feeling this way..

2 Ask yourself - what would your best self do in this situation

There will be times when frustration sets in, and you seek answers to what's going wrong. This is often when the 'I'm not good enough' loop begins. When you catch yourself thinking this, reframe it to, "What do I not yet know how to do, and where can I find the information I need to learn?" Whether it involves searching online or consulting your coach, it's up to you to take action. There is a wealth of information available, but it's crucial to be discerning. Engage with others and sift through information to determine what is useful to you and what is not. Seek to understand and be your own best teacher.

3 Become comfortable with the uncomfortable

Improvement is challenging. There are no shortcuts, and the better you wish to become, the more you must embrace doing difficult and daunting tasks. Improvement requires doing things you are not yet proficient at, which means you will make mistakes and fail at times. However, the more you are willing to fail, the more you will learn and ultimately achieve mastery. No one achieves greatness by avoiding failure. Embrace the challenge. Keep working on the difficult tasks that you have yet to master. Become comfortable with the uncomfortable.

4 Seek to understand. Be your best teacher

Visualise and journal about the best version of yourself—how you look, act, and think. Familiarise yourself with the person you aspire to be. When facing uncertain situations, ask yourself how your best self would respond and take that action immediately.

5 Ask yourself “what do you need right now”?

When experiencing stress or overwhelm, it's easy to get caught in a whirlwind of emotions and lose track of what your body truly needs. Sometimes, we create meanings for these feelings that lead to inappropriate responses. When caught in this whirlwind, ask yourself, "What can I do right now to help these big emotions pass?" It might involve stopping for a drink of water, focusing on your breath, moving to a quieter space, or finding someone to talk to. Whatever it may be, asking yourself this question allows your body to communicate its true needs.

6 Know your why

Your "why" is the purpose that drives you out of bed each morning and motivates you to tackle tasks you might not always want to do. It's more profound than a mere goal. Your why has an emotional connection and often involves serving others. It keeps you motivated during tough times when you feel like giving up. To discover your why, ask yourself this question five times in succession: "Why do I want this goal?" Answer each time, then repeat the question using your previous answer. Continue this pattern for three more questions or until you reach an answer that resonates deeply within you, evoking an emotional response and revealing what truly drives you.

7 There is a balance between work and play

Balancing work and play is crucial. It's vital to clearly understand what's required to be competitive at your desired level. Higher performance levels demand greater training and accountability. However, it's essential to consider other aspects of your life that bring you joy and engage in those activities when possible. The last thing you want is to start resenting your sport, so consistently negotiating the balance between your commitments and downtime with friends is key.

8 Find great mentors

Everyone needs at least one great mentor in their life. While parents can be wonderful mentors, their emotions can sometimes influence their responses. Mentors and coaches, being more detached emotionally, can challenge and influence you in ways that close family members might not. Every successful athlete has had a great coach or mentor guiding them through the highs and lows of high-performance sports. Find someone who is already doing, or has done in the past, what you aspire to achieve. Start by asking them questions and showing curiosity about their world. Get to know them in any way you can, and over time, they will willingly help you grow and succeed.