

**Get
your head
in
the game**

Sport/Performance Psychology Resource List For Athletes, Performing Artists And Parents*

“Mental discipline and attention control training means learning to play to your strengths and to recognize, correct, and minimize your weaknesses. When you cannot accept your own vulnerability and imperfection, you cannot accept mistakes. [Frustration due to perceived imperfection] builds and you feed on distractions; use minor irritations as excuses; blame others, the competitive condition, or a minor injury [because] it is easier to do that than to accept your own limitations.” (Nideffer, 103-106)

The following resource list will introduce you to or enhance your mental training. Some are inspirational reads or movies, some are how-to-guides, and some are technical reads that will help you understand the concepts of sport/performance psychology and mental training. The resources are categorized as easy, moderate, or advanced, depending on the level of material covered and the ease of the read. We’ve also included links for purchasing each book either through Amazon or the author’s individual website. By consulting this resource list, you recognize the need to enhance your (or your child’s) mental training, thereby putting yourself on a path towards significant performance improvement. Enjoy and good luck!

What’s “Hot” Now

The Talent Code: Greatness isn’t born. It’s grown. Here’s how. (Dan Coyle, 2008)

http://www.amazon.com/Talent-Code-Greatness-Born-Grown/dp/055380684X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1292950954&sr=1-1

Moderate-Advanced. Age 16+. What makes Brazilians so good at soccer? Why are there so many Russian female tennis players in the Top 100 in the world? The Talent Code explores the characteristics that set these talent hotbeds apart, making them extraordinary instead of ordinary. This theoretical read will explain the advantages of deliberate practice. “Making progress became a matter of small failures, a rhythmic pattern of small botches, and something else: a common facial expression. His eyes are taut; they are so focused, he looks like he’s somewhere else. And then something clicks: he began to nail the move.”

Bring Your ‘A’ Game: A young athlete’s guide to mental toughness. (Jennifer Etnier, 2009)

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_0_17?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=bring+your+a+game&srefix=bring+your+a+game

Easy. Age 14+. “Are you a young athlete who wants to perform well in your sport? Do you want to learn mental skills to help you deal with pressure?” This is a practical sports psych guide written specifically for young athletes. An easy read with lots of good information on how to get the most out of your performance through mental training techniques.

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Born to Run: A hidden tribe, super athletes, and the greatest race the world has never seen. (Christopher McDougall, 2009)

http://www.amazon.com/Born-Run-Hidden-Superathletes-Greatest/dp/0307266303/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1292951255&sr=1-1

Moderate. Age 16+. "Why does my foot hurt?" was the question author Christopher McDougall asked himself, inspiring the journey to uncover the greatest runners of all the time, the legendary Tarahumara. The Tarahumara are capable of running hundreds of miles without rest and have been known to outrun their prey while hunting on foot. 'Their superhuman talent' is coupled with immunity to diseases 'that plague modern existence.' This book will inspire you to achieve seemingly impossible feats by sharing the stories of those who have already accomplished some.

The Sport Psych Handbook. (Shane Murphy, 2005)

http://www.amazon.com/Sport-Psych-Handbook-Shane-Murphy/dp/0736049045/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292951387&sr=1-1

Advanced. Age 16+. "This is written for the athlete and coach who wants the best information from the top minds in the field of sport psychology today." Each chapter addresses a specific area of sport psychology in a simple, but comprehensive manner, with practical applications to real-life competition. It addresses challenging topics such as recovery, dealing with injuries and eating disorders, in addition to an exceptional chapter on the use of imagery (it is more than just visualization). Several chapters are written especially for coaches on topics such as leadership, team building and effective communication. This collection by leading experts of field is an excellent resource for serious athletes and coaches.

Classic Resources

The New Toughness Training for Sports: Mental, emotional and physical conditioning from one of the world's premiere sports psychologists. (James Loehr, 1995)

http://www.amazon.com/New-Toughness-Training-Sports-Psychologists/dp/0452269989/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1292951545&sr=1-1

Easy-Moderate. Age 16+. "It's never over till it's over. Never stop fighting. Never give up. Never surrender. No matter how bad it gets, no matter how deep your pain; persistence, faith in yourself, and an undauntable spirit will eventually break you free." This updated edition of the sports psychology classic includes a daily training log, explains the meaning and importance of mental toughness, the concept of real versus performance self, recovery, and the Ideal Performance State (IPS). "Toughness is the ability to consistently perform toward the upper range of your talent and skill regardless of competitive circumstances." This no-nonsense book will help you toughen up.



Mastery: The keys to success and long-term fulfillment. (George Leonard, 1992)

http://www.amazon.com/Mastery-Keys-Success-Long-Term-Fulfillment/dp/0452267560/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1292951665&sr=1-1

Moderate-Advanced. Age 16+. "Drawing on Zen philosophy and his expertise in the martial art of aikido, Leonard shows how the process of mastery can help us attain a higher level of excellence..." Leonard outlines the 5 Essential Keys to Mastery and the Tools for Mastery. Used by the (West Point), this book will teach you to practice for the sake of practice and to be satisfied with the plateaus in between the bursts of success and learning, both essential skills of the true Master.

Athletes' Guide to Mental Training. (Robert Nideffer, 1985)

http://www.amazon.com/Athletes-Guide-Mental-Training/dp/093125096X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292951739&sr=1-1

Moderate. Age 14+. How often do you mentally train while physically training? Would you do anything to reach your full potential? "Within limits, you can be what you want to be. No one has realized his or her full potential. There has never been an analysis of a world record performance that did not identify ways upon which the performance could have been improved. Sometimes the key to expanding your own potential is to ease off...the worst thing you can do is expect too much. The demand for personal perfection and control can haunt the talented athletes." This book will teach you the mental training essentials to 'overcome choking in the big game, negative self-talk and psyching yourself out.'

Fight your Fear and Win: Seven skills for performing your best under pressure – at work, in sports, on stage. (Don Greene, 2001)

http://www.amazon.com/Fight-Your-Fear-Win-Pressure-At/dp/0767906268/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292951837&sr=1-1

Easy-Moderate. Age 16+. "Fight Your Fear and Win is the ultimate tool for conquering your fear and achieving success when you need it most." This book is targeted at experienced professionals but has extensive practical applicability to the young athletes' sport experience. Includes a "Seven Skills Survey" to help one identify a specific weakness that could be "holding" your performance abilities back and information on how to overcome that weakness.



Resources for Parents of Young Athletes and Performing Artists

Sports and Your Child: A 50-Minute Guide for Parents (Frank Smoll & Ronald Smith, 1997)

http://www.amazon.com/Sports-Your-Child-Ronald-Smith/dp/1886346054/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292952475&sr=8-1

Easy. All ages. "All parents do as well as they can, within the limits of their awareness." Most parents can increase that level of awareness with this practical, get-to-the-point, easy read written by two of the world's leading experts on youth sports. The authors provide straight forward answers questions that parents routinely face: How many sports should your child play? How can you help your child after a tough loss? Should I coach my own child? It only takes an hour to read, and is well worth the effort.

101 Ways to Be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making athletics a positive experience for your child. (Joel Fish and Susan Magee, 2003)

http://www.amazon.com/101-Ways-Terrific-Sports-Parent/dp/0743227026/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292952537&sr=1-1

Easy. All ages. "The determining factor in whether a child between the ages of six and seventeen enjoys athletics is his or her parents—not the sport, coach, or team." This thought-provoking read will offer practical advice that can be immediately employed to make your child's athletic experience a positive one. This book offers 101 tips broken into ten categories: awareness, competition, performance, specialization, coaching concerns, sibling rivalry, injury, quitting, self-esteem, and family issues. "Tip #1: Give your child unconditional love, no matter what happens on the field."

Whose Game Is It, Anyway? A guide to helping your child get the most from sports, organized by age and stage. (Richard Ginsburg & Stephen Durant, 2006)

http://www.amazon.com/Whose-Game-Anyway-Helping-Organized/dp/0618474609/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292952651&sr=1-1

Advanced. All ages. "Whose Game Is It, Anyway?" is a more technical read which includes a three-step program: know yourself, know your child, know your environment. Part one of this book will educate parents on four age-relevant developmental stages: the early years (1-5); elementary school years (6-12); the teen years (13-18); and higher learning and higher stakes (19+). Part two addresses general topics such as "should we push our children?" and "quitting, burning out, and moving on." The book concludes with an interesting question and answer section, covering a wide variety of questions that any parent has wanted to ask.



Swimming Specific Resources

Smoke on the Water: A swimmer's and coach's guide to developing mental toughness. (Alan Goldberg, 2010)

<http://www.competitivedge.com/content/smoke-on-the-water>

Easy. Age 14+ and coaches. "Are you getting the most out of your training every day? Do you get too nervous in races to swim your best? Are you a mentally tough swimmer? Do you lose to opponents you should not lose to? To become a champion at any level and to go as fast as YOU can, you have to learn to use your head. Don't leave one of the most important parts of your training and performance to chance." This comprehensive how-to-guide will help you reach your swimming goals through mental training techniques.

Developing Mentally Tough Swimmers: A swim coach's guide to integrating mental toughness training over the course of a season. (Alan Goldberg, 1997)

<http://www.competitivedge.com/content/dmts-developing-mentally-tough-swimmers>

Easy. For coaches. A comprehensive guide designed to help coaches understand and implement mental toughness training into their season. While targeted at coaches, includes many tools that current swimmers could employ.



Movies

For any young athlete or performer, especially the visual learners, movies are consummate inspirational storytellers. Practice your visualization skills by putting yourself in the cleats, suit, skates, or bobsled of any of these amazing athletes!

What's "Hot" Now with the Young Crowd

The following movies received the Top 5 highest ratings in a recent (2010) survey of 29 young swimmers (13-18 year old) and their coaches.

The Blind Side (2009)

Easy. Age 14+. (Football). Could you simply close your eyes to escape a negative environment and then channel this energy into competition?

Remember the Titans (2000)

Easy. Age 14+. (Football). Could you and your teammates join together, despite significant cultural pressures that tell you not to, and become an unstoppable force?

Miracle (2004)

Easy. Age 14+. (Ice hockey). Could you believe enough in yourself to take down a dominant and mighty giant in your sport?

The Guardian (2006)

Easy. Age 14+. (Swimming). Could you forgive yourself for a horrible accident and channel this newfound energy to help others?

Cool Runnings (1993)

Easy. Age 14+. (Bobsled). Could you believe you can achieve a goal after so many people tell you your crazy for even trying?



Classic Sport Psychology Movies

One of the risks of relying solely upon recommendations of youth, is that they may not be aware of some of the timeless classics that have been around since before they started watching movies. The films below are a portion of my (Dr. Charlie's) personal list of "classics" that stand the test of time. The list is far from complete, but may include some surprises for athletes who are 30 or younger (such as a *really* young Kevin Costner in *American Flyers*, or Madonna, Gena Davis and Tom Hanks in *A League of Their Own*). For additional recommendations, check out the Sport Psychology Movies List Project (<http://www.uniconmons.com/node/19491>) or the Sport Psychology Movie Database (<http://web.archive.org/web/20071121003812/http://www.geocities.com/sportsmovies/>).

American Flyers (1985, Cycling)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088707/>

Bend it Like Beckham (2002, Women's soccer)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0286499/>

Breaking Away (1979, Cycling)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078902/>

Bull Durham (1988, Baseball; mature content)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094812/>

Chariots of Fire (1981, Track and Field)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082158/>

For the Love of the Game (1999, Baseball)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0126916/>

Hoosiers (1986, Basketball)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091217/>

A League of Their Own (1992, Women's baseball)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0091217/>

Legend of Bagger Vance (2000, Golf)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0146984/>

Prefontaine (1997, Running)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119937/>

Rudy (1993, Football)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108002/>

Tin Cup (1996, Golf)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0117918/>

