

PSYCHOLOGY AND PERFORMANCE

THE EDGE

With more research and experience behind them, serious athletes are speaking out on the benefits of mental training. More and more individuals are looking for qualified mental trainers to teach them practical techniques to handle the stresses of competition to enhance performance. Organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) are working hard to develop guidelines for mental trainers and to disseminate up-to-date information in the field by holding comprehensive seminars.

Mental training must be included along with physical training to meet today's demand for excellence. Those that fail to incorporate mental training into their programs may find themselves unable to catch up.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Psychology of Performance?

Simply put, psychology is the study of the mind and its behavior in relation to a particular field of knowledge or activity of an individual or group. Performance Psychology is the study and application of the characteristics of the mind as it relates to performance.

Is the mental aspect of performance important?

Extremely important. Most individuals at the elite, professional levels feel that mental preparation is the difference between winning and losing.

How can I benefit by using mental training techniques?

You can benefit in many ways. This includes better preparation, increased confidence and more focused performance. One Olympic caliber swimmer, who had plateaued for three years, set three personal bests in one meet, after just two sessions of mental training.

Will messing with my mind hurt my performance?

No! You unconsciously use mental techniques all the time. Did you ever hear of psyching yourself up or getting up for the game? Using mental train-

ing techniques in a structured and consistent way has been proven to enhance performance not hurt it.

Are these techniques proven, or will I be a guinea pig for someone?

Mental training is merely taking what you are already doing and structuring it. Most techniques are well known and safe.

There is little to fear when working with a trained consultant.

Can these techniques be used to help with injuries?

Yes! An exciting new area of health psychology has to do with the psychological reduction of pain due to injury. Psychological profiles of injury-prone individuals are emerging along with psychological methods to reduce pain and speed healing.

Read about my exciting new method called TAP™ (Talking Away Pain™) to deal with pain and injuries.