

# Total Athlete Development Excerpt 1

## Eight Keys to Total Athlete Preparation

*What is mental toughness?* Unfortunately, there isn't a universal answer for this question. However, in my 10 plus years of working with top high school, college and professional athletes, I have experienced the best, most consistent and mentally tough athletes living the 5P's of Peak Performance & Mental Toughness. Here is simple framework to help your athletes start developing the mental toughness that we will define as being at your best when it means the most, every day.

**1. LIVE IN THE PRESENT.** Great athletes live in the moment. They plan their days the night before and wake up on a mission to maximize their day. They don't spend time; they invest time through having daily goals, weekly missions and a plan to help take them from where they are to where they want to be. They don't count the days – they make the days count.

**2. FOCUS ON THE PROCESS.** Mentally tough athletes win more by not focusing on winning. They win more by focusing on the process of what it takes to win. They focus all of their time, energy and attention to what they can control and let go of what they can't. They embody what a University of Alabama athlete said to me: "My goal must be in my control, because focusing on what I can't control is a total waste of my time and life."

**3. STAY POSITIVE.** Athletics is supposed to be tough. You are going to enjoy some major wins and will get to embrace some tough losses. Mental toughness is about choosing to look at a loss as a learning experience and positive feedback for you to get better. Failure is positive feedback, and in life there are winners and LEARNERS! The only time you are a loser is when you stop learning.

**4. KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE.** Keeping the right perspective is critical to your success in athletics. Do you keep a "HAVE TO" or a "WANT TO" perspective when it comes to practice and training? Champions realize that HARD WORK is part of the process in reaching your potential and they keep a "WANT TO" mindset when it comes to hard work. Look, if your coaches have to remind you to work hard, you should probably go find something else to do. WHY? Hard work is a controllable. You MUST maximize all aspects of your performance that you can control - and all you can control is yourself and your Attitude, Appearance, Body Language, Perspective, Preparation, Performance, Effort, Energy and Emotions). Keep your perspective from a place of want to, never have to.

**5. PREPARATION ROUTINES.** Former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden said it best: "Failure to prepare is preparing to fail." Preparation routines are an essential part of consistent high-level performance.

**Recommendation:** I asked four Ultimate Fighting Championship World Champions, multiple Olympic Medalists, NCAA National and Texas State Champions about the best of the best know how to prepare. They all know the following 3 key principles of preparation and put them into action each day.

### **6. CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES & CHANGE YOUR MENTALITY.**

When you show up to the locker room as the student, have a routine that you go through to shift your mindset from student to athlete so that you can be more present and separate the pressure of being a student to the pleasure of being an athlete. When you change from your street clothes,

leave the stress of school, the issues with your relationships and the drama of being an athlete in the locker with your street clothes and give yourself permission to be present and free to PLAY your sport.

**7. TURN YOUR PHONE OFF.** Yes, I know... you can't remember the last time you turned your phone off. Well... if you want to be great, you must be present and a big part of your routine must be invested into getting your mind into the moment. Turning off your phone while you are training/competing will help you to shut off the outside world and get immersed into what you are doing in the moment.

**8. RELAX, BREATHE & VISUALIZE YOUR SUCCESS.** Taking 2-3 minutes to find a quiet place on your own to close your eyes, focus on your breathing and to visualize your best performance will give you the presence of mind and body and the confidence you need to DOMINATE The Day and get the most out of your potential for that day.

*If you get the most out of each day, you will get the most out of your career. Today + today + today = your athletic career. Make the BIG TIME where you are and treat today like the state championship so that you can treat the state championship like today!*

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