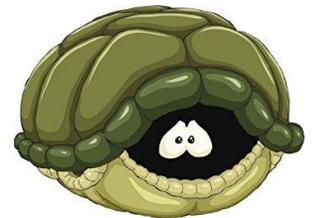


Mental Toughness for Swimmers

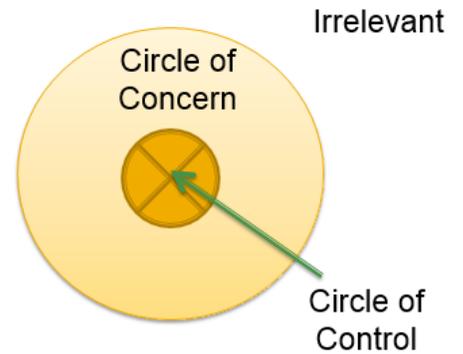
Normal automatic, “bottom-up” distractions include: worry, anger, fear of what could go wrong, “what if?” thinking, avoidance of pain and fatigue, seeking comfort (low motivation to practice, desire to slow down, relaxed attention, decreased effort).

Here are 10 skills and ideas to help:

1. 5-7 centering breath
 - In for 5, hold, out for 7 (drop shoulders, focus cue)
 - Clears the mind, brings attention to the present, allows focus on WIN
2. Accept what is
 - Focus on the problem leads to tension and choking
 - Struggle for control of thoughts and feelings pulls attention away from swimming
3. Mindfulness is a specific way of paying attention: on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgement, opinions or “thinking”
 - Practicing 10-20 min daily will improve your ability to choose your attention and let go of distractions
4. Thoughts are just thoughts
 - Your mind is not your friend ... your thoughts are there to warn you of danger: of what could go wrong, **not** what will go wrong
 - Remember the turtle’s shell (and what happens if he stays there!)
5. Actions are independent of what you think and feel!
 - Swimming doesn’t care what you think and feel
 - The fastest swimmer always wins
 - Remember “I can’t walk” exercise
6. Replace your “buts” with “and”
 - Thoughts and feelings are not excuses for behavior choices
 - “ ... but I’m tired” is an excuse to not do something – one or the other
 - “ ... and I’m tired” acknowledges how you feel while you do something *at the same time*
7. Be willing
 - Choose to suffer in service of your goals ... what are you willing to feel to be great?



8. Focus on **What's Important Now**
9. Focus on what you control: what you do and your reactions to thoughts and feelings
10. Mistakes are painful AND necessary for learning



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Mental Toughness in 60 Seconds

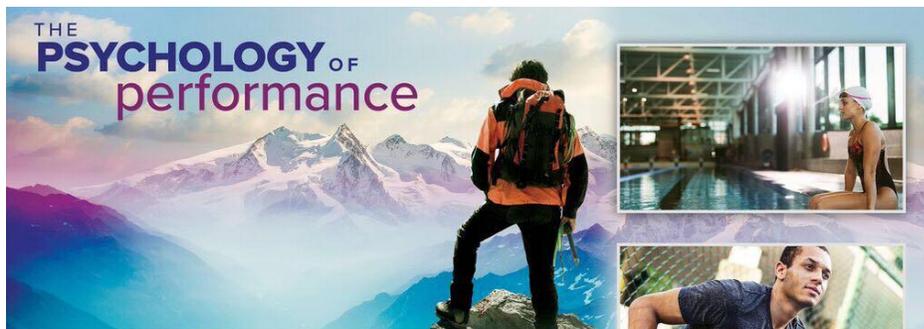
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- Available at Mary Free Bed YMCA, 5500 Burton St., SE
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