



Mental Toughness and Your Habits

Do you know that the level of your mental toughness can be directly related to your habits? Many people think that being mentally tough is a character trait with which people are born. I believe that to a very large extent, anyone can easily develop and improve their mental toughness.

How high would you say your mental toughness is? Answer the following:

- Do you give up on exercise when it gets tough?
- Do you find excuses for not working out?
- Are you stuck near the same time regardless how you train?

If you answered yes to any of the above, then I would argue that your mental toughness needs improvement. When you allow an excuse to stop or slow you, you're only hurting yourself. Either you don't know what to do next, in which case it would be a lack of motivation or willpower and one could argue a lack of mental toughness, that's holding you back.

Don't get me wrong, we all have our struggles. At times, it may make sense (injury) to back down. Also, I don't think that slowing down due to pain during a hard workout or race is a sign of lack of mental toughness. However, when you have mental toughness, you do not allow obstacles or excuses to block your way. Instead, you find a way or find someone to help you battle through regardless of the circumstance.

I view mental toughness as a developed character trait that helps you get through a tough set of circumstances, challenging program or process.

There are certain traits that are displayed by people with mental toughness. These include:

- Motivation
- Positive mindset
- Self control
- Good at handling pressure
- Being energetic

People who are mentally tough are usually surrounded by successful people. They show behaviors such as being consistent, adhering to schedules and always approach things with a positive and professional mindset. In other words, they understand their limitations, but also know their responsibilities and they figure out how carry them out.

I have found that one of the best ways to improve your mental toughness is to set a goal that will involve tasks or habits in which you have a weakness.

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For example, you may want to run a ½ or full marathon, neither of which you have accomplished. Even if you've never run further than 5 or 10k, it's necessary to put together a plan to accomplish your goal. I also think it's important to add clarity (your "why") to the goal. If you understand what the goal really means to you and how badly you want it, it will be much easier to stay motivated when times get hard. You will be in a much better position with clarity to have mental toughness and achieve your goals.

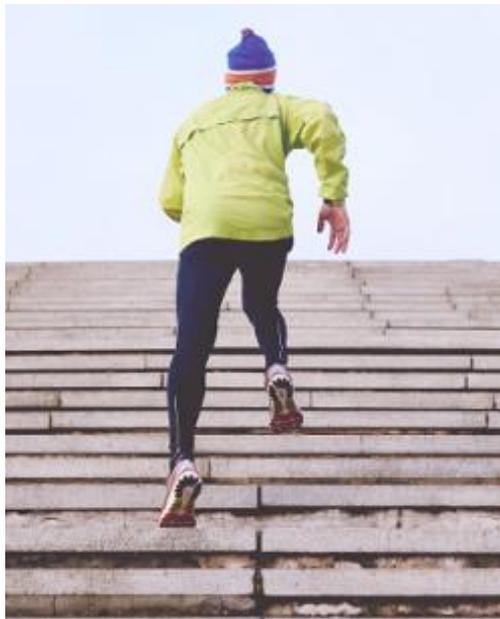


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If time has been your biggest challenge to training for a long race, keeping in mind your "why" will encourage you to figure out how to schedule the necessary time to complete your training runs.

You might say that your "why" helps you stay determined which motivates you to keep going, which is the essence of being mentally tough. So, in order to succeed, all you need is the perseverance to keep on going. As a runner, you need to train properly, in addition to scheduling and planning out your workouts, meals and anything else necessary for your success.

Here's a few more strategies to help you develop mental toughness.



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- 1) Define what the words "mental toughness" mean for you. There is no one definition that suits everyone, so write down a few things that you could do that would imply you have mental toughness.

Here's are a few examples:

- Waking early so get in a workout you might have missed
 - Finishing your next work project ahead of schedule
 - Stop drinking soda
 - Doing that extra rep or running 1 more mile before quitting
 - Not missing family or date night with your kids or spouse.
- 2) If you are stuck in the same old routine consider when was the last time you tried something new? Challenging your brain by doing something new is a great stimulation tool that helps to increase your confidence as well.

Trying these new healthy habits and successfully making them a part of your daily routine will help make you mentally tough.

In summary, changing your mindset is one of the first steps to increasing your toughness. You need to have a positive mindset and be committed to following through with things. One of the best ways to demonstrate that you have mental toughness is by taking action and by proving it to yourself!

When you are confident that you can now tackle things head on, both with or without someone's help, your mental toughness muscle is growing nicely. When you keep a positive mindset about yourself, your mental toughness will not shrink, regardless of your circumstance.