

GAME ON!

In this issue...

- *The psychology of tolerating pain.*
- *Making rest a priority.*
- *Ideas for your downtime.*

"The man who can drive himself further once the effort gets painful is the man who will win."

-Roger Bannister

Master your mental game & take control of your performance

SUFFERFEST Enduring the pain of a hard effort

Your lungs are burning, your legs are on fire, and you're dripping enough sweat to put out a small forest fire... you are suffering. When you've taken care of the elements that can contribute to pain – hydration, nutrition, fitness, training... what's left? Your mindset plays a huge part in your ability to tolerate pain. You have to be able to effectively deal with pain if you want to be a competitive endurance athlete. When you need to dig deep and go harder

than you ever thought possible – how do you it?



Placebo/Nocebo Effect

Our expectations play a part in our lived experience. You only have to know the story of Roger Bannister breaking the four minute mile to

understand the impact expectations can have on performance. In 1955, just one year after Bannister broke that perceived four minute barrier, 50 more people broke it as well; a record that was thought to be impossible to break just one year earlier. It took that one person to believe in the possibility, and once people saw that it was possible, their own expectations changed.

Story continued page 2

PLAY HARD AND REST HARDER

We are a country that is on the go. On average we work more hours than our European counterparts and take *weeks* less vacation time. Not only do we work hard, but many of us play hard too. The one thing we need tend leave out is downtime. Imagine working at your job for 365 days straight with no break; no vacation from work whatsoever. You'd go crazy! Rest is imperative for a high level of performance whether it's in the office or on the playing field. Creativity doesn't happen without

rest. Muscles don't get built without rest. Your body and brain need a break. Getting adequate sleep, nutrition, and regular massage can all help, but what else can you do? Here are a couple important additions to consider for your resting plan:

Cross-train

Cross-training is like rotating your crops. Plants use various types and amounts of minerals from the soil they are planted in. Farmer's rotate crops in order to

keep the soil from getting depleted. If you're always doing the same workout – you're going to get depleted. Change it up!

Liming

Liming is term that comes from the Caribbean. Liming basically means, *hanging out*. You need to have time when you are doing absolutely nothing. No agenda; just hanging out and being in the moment. You need dedicated downtime giving you a break from work and sport. Check out the sidebar column ideas!

Time to Lime?

Here are some ideas to get you started on making *hang out* time a priority!

Big-time Lime

Take a Vacation!

Go camping and get completely out of your element – away from the distractions of e-mail, cell phones, and T.V. Or hit the Caribbean and try out the locals' way of liming!

Hit the Beach

Buy a \$5 blow up raft and spend the day floating on the river. Grab a towel, a six pack, some chips & dip and head out to the ocean for a day of lying on the beach.

Key Lime

Grab your iPod and go lay on the grass for 2 songs.

Have a potluck dinner with friends and hang around an outdoor fire all night.

Grab a blanket and have a picnic lunch in your own backyard and then finish it off with a nap in the sun (don't forget your sunscreen!).

SUFFERFEST, CON'T

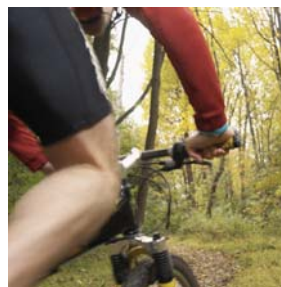
For years, researchers have seen evidence of the placebo effect; a person's condition improves because of their expectation that it will improve. Researchers are also discovering that the power of the mind works both ways. The nocebo effect works the same way, but in the opposite direction. "Take this sugar-pill and it will make you stronger" has the same effect on your beliefs as "Take this sugar pill and it will make you weak". If you expect that the pain you will experience during your competition will be more than you can handle, then it will be.

Perception of the Pain

Your interpretation of the pain has an impact on your ability to tolerate it. Connect the feeling of pain to getting stronger. Connect the feeling of pain to accomplishing your goals. Associate the pain with something positive versus something negative. Fighting against the pain only makes it worse. Learn to accept the pain and appreciate it as part of the experience. Hold these truths to be

self-evident:

- *I have made the choice to be here.*
- *The pain will end.*
- *Everyone else around me is in pain too (even if they don't look like it!).*
- *I control my perception of my pain.*



Mentally Prepare

Focus

At the highest levels of intense effort, it is impossible to completely distract yourself from the pain you are feeling. At those times, rather than trying to distract yourself from the pain, choose to focus on your breathing, on being efficient, and on smooth technique.

Stay relaxed

Your muscles tense in response to pain. Make

sure you aren't adding any extra physical tension as you compete. Control your breathing and relax any muscles that don't need to be engaged at that moment.

Imagery

When are the times during your competition when you will be suffering? For each scenario, write out where your focus needs to be and what your thoughts need to be to endure the pain of that moment. Then practice by using imagery. Remember the placebo/nocebo effect and how expectations can impact performance. For each scenario, imagine yourself moving through that moment feeling the pain AND also feeling confident with your ability to deal with the pain. Make sure to practice where your focus will be and what your thoughts will be as well.

If you feel like your tolerance for suffering pales in comparison to your competitors, mental preparation has to be added into your training plan. Prepare ahead of time for what is to come and take control of your performance.

Carrie Cheadle, M.A.
(707) 338-0854

performingedge@mindspring.com
www.carriecheadle.com