

GAME ON!

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"The big thing is not what happens to us in life, but what we do about what happens to us." George Allen, pro football coach

Master your mental game & take control of your performance

SIDELINED! What to do when the cold & flu season strikes

It's winter time and not only does the old north wind bring a chill to the air, but all too often it can bring the cold and flu to your front door. You're feeling good, training hard and suddenly you feel that little tickle in the back of your throat. Nothing is worse than being sidelined from training or competition because you are sick. Here are some tips on how to deal with being on the sideline.

Listen to your body

Right now your job is to get better. Most athletes want to keep training and push through being sick. Part of being an athlete is knowing when to rest. Pushing yourself through training can prolong your illness and make it worse. You need to adjust your training so your body has energy to recover and repair itself.

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NEW YEAR'S RESTITUTION

It's February – have you forgotten about your New Year's Resolutions yet? January 1st is a time of renewal; our chance to start with a clean slate which we quickly fill up with things we want to accomplish. Then we put away the slate and forget about it until New Year's Eve rolls around again.

One of the most important and most neglected aspects of setting goals is checking in on them. Your ability to progress with your goals is directly related to the feedback

you receive on how you're doing. Feedback lets you know what is working and what isn't so you can make adjustments so you can continue to build on your performance. A good goal setting plan needs to have a check-in time built into it. After you write out your goals, pick three future dates to check-in on your progress. Write the dates in your calendar or training log. On those dates evaluate your training and performance goals by asking yourself the

following questions:

1. How much progress have I made towards my goal?
2. What has worked well?
3. What has been challenging?
4. Do I need to adjust my goal?

It's time to reclaim your resolutions. Don't let your resolutions be a once a year event. Resolve to evaluate your goals and see what you can accomplish!

Come on and Laugh a Little!

Laughter boosts the immune system! Pop in a DVD of your favorite stand up comedian and give your funny bone a workout. Or kick back with a hot beverage and one of these laugh-out-loud movies:

The Classics

Better Off Dead

Airplane!

Monty Python & the Holy Grail

Sports Themed

Happy Gilmore

Nacho Libre

Slap Shot

Caddyshack

Want more funny films to choose from? Check out www.afi.com and look up the 100 years of laughs!

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Relax

In addition to trying to muscle your way through being sick, stress can also prolong illness. If you want to recover as quickly as possible, you need to relax. That means letting go of the frustration of being sick and focus on getting better. Take this opportunity to work on your imagery skills with some active recovery.

Go lie on the couch and take several deep breaths. Each time you exhale, let your body relax more deeply. When you are nice and relaxed, use your imagination to see yourself fighting off those germ invaders. (My imagery typically involves sword wielding germ fighters in metal armor!) Or go the scientific route and imagine your body is creating more white blood cells to fight off the invading virus. Not only will you be practicing your imagery skills, but you'll be helping yourself de-stress and heal as well.



Performing while you're sick

If you compete in sports long enough, there will come a time when you have to pull out the performance of a lifetime when you are sick. *It's important to listen to your body and know when to stop.* However, if you are fighting off a cold and about to go into a championship game, you may be called on to perform when you aren't feeling in peak condition. One of the keys to dealing with this situation is to control your thoughts.

Repeat after me: *I do not have to feel 100% in order to pull off a good performance.*

The more you think about how horrible you feel - the more horrible you feel! Controlling your thoughts in this situation can help take the edge off those aches and pains. Let go of the fact that you are sick. There is nothing you can do about it in that moment. Focus on what you need to do in order to perform to your potential. AND give yourself a break! A great performance on a day that you're sick might not have the same result as a great performance when you are healthy.

When you relax your training or take time off or in order to get well, you have to trust that you are doing the right thing. Setbacks are a part of being an athlete. How you choose to deal with these setbacks, and how you bounce back from them can make or break the rest of your season.

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