



# COMMIT TO MENTAL TRAINING

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The mind and body work together in unison. As athletes we need to remember that it is important to commit to training both. If we train the body alone the mind is neglected, and the reverse is true. Mental training involves training the mind, but just like physical training requires, time, effort and repetition, before one can really see a result. When we train physically we repeat a certain skill or lift varied amounts of weight and the results are usually obvious. Over time, our muscles strengthen, our frames feel stronger or we become more proficient. When one trains mentally overtime, we align all levels of ability and thus harness all of our resources, energizing and awakening the brilliant performer that lies within us all.

To commit to training mentally means more than just focusing on the ice for a period of time. Committing to training mentally means allowing our conscious mind to become involved in understanding our own behavior patterns. It also means being able to train the mind, repetitively, so that any positive behavior becomes a part of the subconscious and can be re-enacted without even having to think about. The idea I'm referring to is that of "automatic processing". We commonly hear this idea that mental training involves too much thinking. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Committing to mental training actually means that eventually we are able to think less about what it is that we need to do for our best performances, freeing up more time to refine and become better players.

We create what has been referred to as a "mental blueprint" of the skill or play that we need to evoke and the more that we practice it mentally, the easier it is to utilize in a game situation.

Our mind is in control of what our body does. This becomes obvious from watching a golfer in two different, yet similar circumstances. A golfer who has mastered the skill of driving a ball can stand up at a driving range and consistently strike a ball the same distance straight ahead over and over again. But, when you ask the golfer to evoke this same skill on the golf course (during a match) it becomes a different thing all together. Why? Physically we know the golfer is completely capable because he has proven this over and over again at the range. However, when placed

on the course there are many other things to contend with. Now the golfer begins to think about his opponents, his score, and the outcome of this event? The golfer on the range was thinking of nothing but striking the ball, but on the course his mind is now cluttered with thoughts that directly affect his performance. An athlete needs to commit to the process of learning how to eliminate these distractions that interfere with his/her performance, so that a skill or play can be evoked just as it would be in isolation when external distractions are removed. Committing to mental training means committing to training your mind for quality and consistent performances and learning the skills necessary in order to perform at your best.



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