

FOCUS – Mental Conditioning

“What’s Your Vision?”

Do you have a vision of who you want to be as an athlete? Do you have a detailed plan of how to make that happen? World champions have a vision, a plan, a direction.

It’s easy to say, “I want to be a champion” or “I want to be a professional athlete.” But exactly how do you plan to put yourself in the position for those “visions” to turn into reality? What exactly are your goals?

Goals help us identify *where* we want to go and outline exactly *how* we can go about getting there. If you wanted to travel across the country, you wouldn’t just hop in your car and drive -- You’d need to plan the trip -- what roads to take, when do I want to arrive, where to get gas and eat, and so on.

Many athletes achieve success without using formal goal setting, but those who *consistently* win usually have developed a specific plan. Developing and maintaining a solid plan, one that has personal meaning, one that specifically walks you through a powerful training program so that you can “play big in big games,” is not an easy task. It takes time to fine-tune your plan, and you’re probably not going to “nail it” on the first attempt - So keep in mind that this process needs to be flexible....you’ll need to adjust your plan from time to time.

If you’re a visual learner, think of the goal setting process like a roadmap with the destination as the ultimate goal. Once a clear picture develops of where you’re going, how do you plan to get there? What are the little steps you need to take to get to the final destination (i.e., what are your short-term or daily goals)?

Keep these thoughts in mind when developing your goal plan:

1. Set Performance Goals, not outcome goals: Performance Goals are those goals that are within your control. Outcome goals (i.e., winning, # of points scored) are outside of your control...and...Check it out: We lose our power when we focus on things outside of our control;
2. State each goal as a positive statement: “Knock down 85% of my free throws” is much more powerful than “don’t airball.”
3. Be precise with your goals: Are they measurable? Are they specific? Do they have target dates (when you’d like to achieve the goal)? A goal of “increasing my field goal

percentage by 10% by the end of the year” is much more powerful than “just do my best.” How will you know if you’ve done your best? Be precise!

4. Write down your goals: Get the plan out of your head...see it on paper. That’s really the only way to keep track of your progress. Remember that the goal setting process needs to be flexible - You can adjust your plan at anytime;
5. Set reachable goals: Does the goal inspire you...and....do you have a chance of achieving the goal if you really stretched yourself? Reachable goals are realistic;

Here’s a nice mnemonic to help you remember how to set powerful goals: SMART COP.

Specific
Meaningful
Adjustable
Realistic
Target date

Controllable and Challenging
Optimistic (i.e., positive)
Public (share your goals with others)

Got it? GOOD JOB! Now, if you want to train like a champion, take a few minutes and write down a game plan of *where* you want to go and *how* you’re gonna get there.

At Velocity Sports Performance we train “*poise under pressure*” through our FOCUS – Mental Conditioning program. During each workout, our FOCUS-credentialed coaches incorporate the mental conditioning tools mentioned in this article. At Velocity, we truly train the mind and the body in our pursuit of performance excellence.

The FOCUS – Mental Conditioning program and this article were written and developed by Dr. Michael Gervais of Pinnacle Performance, Inc. To develop a mental skills program to meet your individual needs, email Pinnacle Performance at pinnacle-performer@pinnacle-performer.com. If you’d like to see how your mental skills compare to world champions in your sport, visit www.pinnacle-performer.com to take our online mental skills assessment.