

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *REC1050-17 – Mental Fitness – Part 1*

### **Mental Fitness**

Mental fitness refers to an athlete's ability to optimally regulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and act in a purposeful and consistent manner while coping with the many demands placed on him or her.

### **Mental Fitness, Attributes, and Skills**

Common mental fitness attributes linked to elite performers include the following:

- Commitment and ability to set goals
- Control of activation and relaxation levels (i.e. arousal level)
- Ability to manage stress and anxiety
- Positive attitude and mindset
- Passion and love for sport
- Work-ethic
- Responsibility

### **Long-Term Athletic Development (LTAD) Overview**

Mental fitness development involves building a mental skill set, typically through a mental training program. Most comprehensive mental training programs emphasize the development of psychological skills, such as anxiety and stress management, imagery, relaxation and activation, goal-setting, focusing, distraction control, self-talk, self-awareness and reflection, pre-competition and pre-performance training, and confidence building.

Examples of mental skills and attributes that can help guide this regulation include:

- **What athletes say to themselves:** Self-talk, keeping perspective and a positive attitude, focus, and reflection.
- **What athletes see in their minds:** Imagery, self-awareness, focus, goal-setting, and the overall "mission" or athletic pursuit.
- **What athletes feel:** Managing, acceptance or challenge of emotions and anxiety, adjusting arousal, maintaining composure, and passion and love for the sport.
- **How athletes act:** Pre-competition routines, performance plans, confidence building, mindfulness, commitment, execution, effective communication, healthy team environment, and distraction management.

## LTAD by Age Group

[http://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mental-Fitness\\_Feb2\\_2014\\_ENG\\_web.pdf](http://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mental-Fitness_Feb2_2014_ENG_web.pdf)

LTAD Stage	Core Principles
Active Start (0-6 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Sport and physical activity are fun.</li> <li>□ The sport environment is a safe, enjoyable, inclusive, and exciting place to be.</li> <li>□ Sport has a place for everyone. Each child can strive to grow and improve at his or her own level.</li> </ul>
Fundamentals (Females 6-8yrs, Males 6-9yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Children participate in different types of structured and unstructured physical activity, games, and play.</li> <li>□ Rather than winning and outcomes, fun, creativity, and effort are at the center of sport activity.</li> <li>□ Basic concepts of relaxation and imagery can be introduced in creative and fun ways.</li> </ul>
Learn to Train (Females 8-11yrs, Males 9-12yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Basic principles of goal-setting are reviewed and incorporated into training along with an emphasis on effort and responsibility.</li> <li>□ Basic awareness of responses to demands, pressure, and nervousness are cultivated as a precursor to the skill of mindfulness, and simple breathing techniques are introduced.</li> <li>□ Imagery and positive thinking are used to continue developing athletes' confidence and motivation, while arousal control strategies such as relaxation and activation can be further developed to manage intensity of emotions.</li> </ul>
Train to Train (Females 11-15yrs, Males 12-16yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Emphasis should remain on learning, developing, testing, and refining all skills and strategies (e.g., physical, technical, tactical, and mental)</li> <li>□ Athletes are introduced to pre-competition routines, mental preparation plans, and more formal performance-debriefing strategies.</li> <li>□ Athletes' awareness and mindfulness of mental, physical, and emotional responses to demands and pressure continue to grow.</li> <li>□ Athletes can become aware of a positive sport-life balance and start to monitor mental, emotional, and physical fatigue.</li> </ul>
Train to Compete (Females 15-21yrs, Males 16-23yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Athletes develop awareness of how day-to-day training connects to competition readiness.</li> <li>□ Education about individual responses to performance anxiety and strategies for managing and accepting responses takes place.</li> <li>□ Athletes practice and refine pre-, post-, and in-competition routines and develop competition strategy planning an execution.</li> </ul>
Train to Win (Females 18+, Males 19+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Athletes establish a high level of self-awareness and ability to listen to their bodies' needs in relation to performance and recovery.</li> <li>□ Athletes learn to manage and accept pre-performance anxiety in varying competitive situations; appropriate coping skills to meet excessive demands are developed.</li> <li>□ It is important to maintain a high degree of intrinsic or self-determined motivation.</li> <li>□ Athletes should develop a yearly plan for mental training around their competition schedules.</li> </ul>