

# Mental Toughness

## +Handout a tennis ball to each person

Quote from a famous Hall of Famer, NFL Coach, Vince Lombardi

"Mental toughness is many things and rather difficult to explain. Mental toughness is combination of a perfectly disciplined will that refuses to give in. It's a state of mind-you could call it character in action."

*Executing the task at Hand*

*See it with razor sharp focus*

*Smell it*

*Hear it*

*Fell the moment*

*Solid timing while preparing to hit the ball*

### Concentration & Focus

The question people ask me the most is what I think about when I line up for a kick. They want to know if I feel the pressure, but I never think of that. Instead, I concentrate on looking at the spot where the ball will be put.

-George Blanda, former NFL kicker

Concentration as a fortress

To be used as a weapon

The stronger and more sustained an athlete's ability to concentrate, the better he'll consistently execute his task aggressively and effectively.

It takes practice

Learn what is possible and what is not

Can not control external events

You can tell yourself what to do in positive terms.

You can focus on the immediate, rather than the past or the future.

Focus on your approach (which you can control) instead of results which you can't control

You are your own coach on the court

-Self-coaching during competition, using positive functional self talk, will build confidence; criticizing himself and being negative will erode it.

### Harness your energy-don't give it away.

When the point is over, tennis experts look at athletes hold their heads, how they walk, their demeanor and how they move to the next sequence of activity. If you hold your racquet too tightly or your jaw is clenched and you are ruminating about the last point that you messed up, then your muscles and emotional memory will contaminate the next series of points.

### Relentless

Are you relentless on the court? Are you playing every point like it is the game point?

Never give up

Relentless is the reciprocal of quitting-yielding-giving up. It is aggressive, persistent, attack-mode attitude. It defines a warrior. The relentless athlete gives himself intensity, entirety, and consistency to completion.

Put some fire on it.

### Visualization, why it's important & how to add it to your arsenal

Visualization happens before your game (night before)

It requires total concentration (close your eyes)

Success with injured athletes

It's an example of memory controlling the fact. The athlete sees himself participating in the event. He can mentally simulate crowd noise, tension level and circumstance.

-See yourself performing in the top of your game, executing every task effortlessly and effectively.

Rehearse perfection in your mind

## Manage your Feelings

Your anger is something that you will have to deal with, as it is the natural reaction to a poor performance. More often than not, it is just stupid bad luck that you missed shot, misread a play, or tripped. There is no point in getting angry, so it's time to practice controlling your feelings. It can be hard to put the emotions out of your mind, but you have to do so if you are going to be able to focus on the task at hand – rather than how you feel.

There are going to be times when you can feel the emotion, such as during the breaks or stoppages. However, for the rest of the game, you need to keep yourself under a tight rein in order to be sure that your anger or frustration doesn't affect your game – because believe me, it will! Give yourself a moment to let out your frustration, reset your mind, and get back in the game ready and with a clean mental slate. Harness your feelings, and let your opponent get angry and mess their own play up by letting their emotions get out of control.

## Forget About it!

There are some things that you need to forget about, and this selective amnesia is a very important way to boost your game – enabling you to win more matches. You always go through the various parts of the game in your mind, but some things just aren't worth going over and over. For example, if you have just committed a double fault. Don't keep thinking about that lost point. Focus on the next point instead! Go back to your routine (see mental tennis tips # 1) and get ready for the next point.

You have to focus on the positives of each game, thinking about what you did right and trying to come up with the logical process that led to that positive action. If you can recreate the process in your mind, you will be able to set it up the next time you play. You can think about the positive aspects of your game, learn from the mistakes that you make, but then leave all the rest behind and forget about the things that you can do nothing about.

CLOSE

Quote from Serena Williams

**"Tennis is mostly mental. You will win or lose the match before you even get out there."**