

# **SPORT** **PSYCHOLOGY** *by Carrie Hastings*

## **FIVE KEY MENTAL PERFORMANCE TIPS FOR ATHLETES**

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- **Develop a Pre-Performance Routine**  
Establishing a consistent mental and physical routine before competitions helps athletes focus and reduce anxiety. It can include visualization, deep breathing, and positive self-talk. This primes the brain for peak performance.
- **Set Clear, Attainable Goals**  
Goal setting is crucial for maintaining motivation and tracking progress. Athletes should set SMART goals—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This helps them stay focused on growth and achievement.
- **Focus on What You Can Control**  
In high-pressure situations, athletes can get distracted by outcomes or external factors. Focusing on controllable aspects, like effort, technique, and attitude, can improve mental resilience and performance.
- **Practice Mindfulness and Stay Present**  
Mindfulness helps athletes stay present in the moment, avoiding distractions and overthinking. Techniques like meditation or body scans can build awareness and reduce performance anxiety, leading to more consistent results.
- **Develop Mental Toughness and Resilience**  
Mental toughness involves bouncing back from setbacks, staying focused under pressure, and handling adversity. Strategies like positive reframing, staying committed to long-term goals, and embracing challenges can build resilience.