

Quarterly Newsletter

SPORT
PSYCHOLOGY
by Carrie Hastings

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Embrace the Power of Rest this Holiday Season | A Message from Dr. Carrie Hastings



Dear Athletes, Coaches, and
Families,

As the holiday season approaches, it's natural to focus on reconnecting with loved ones, enjoying special traditions, and reflecting on the past year. For athletes, however, this season can also bring a rare chance to pause, recalibrate, and prioritize essential rest—a key but often overlooked aspect of peak performance. This intentional rest period, woven into your holiday plans, not only allows your body to recover physically but also provides valuable mental space for recharging and refocusing.

Training and competition can often demand so much energy that true rest and recovery become afterthoughts, yet they are crucial in preventing burnout and sustaining motivation. Taking time now to reflect, restore, and set new intentions for the coming season will create a stronger, more resilient foundation moving forward.

In this month's newsletter, we'll discuss the mental and physical benefits of rest, explore ways to manage holiday stress, and share strategies for maintaining balance between relaxation and your athletic goals. Let's make this season one of rejuvenation and mental clarity, helping you return to your sport stronger, sharper, and ready for new challenges.

Wishing you and yours a restorative holiday season full of peace, joy, and renewed purpose!

Carrie Hastings

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Over the Holidays:
Relaxation and
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CMPC

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Finding Balance Over the Holidays: Relaxation and Athletic Goals

By Dr. Kat Scardino

As the holiday season approaches, many athletes find themselves juggling the need for relaxation with the commitment to their training goals. This time of year is filled with opportunities for connection, joy, and rejuvenation—essential for long-term well-being—but it's also a season where routines can shift, and momentum can feel interrupted. So, how can you enjoy the holidays without sacrificing your hard-earned progress? Let's explore some strategies that can help you find this balance, supporting both relaxation and your athletic aspirations.

One of the first steps to achieving harmony is to set realistic, short-term goals tailored to the season. The holidays are unique, and expecting to maintain the same training intensity may not be feasible. Adjusting your goals to fit a maintenance mode, rather than a high-performance one, can help. For instance, rather than aiming for a new personal record, focus on staying active a few days a week, prioritizing flexibility and mobility exercises. These lighter goals will keep you connected to your athletic identity while allowing room for celebration and downtime.

Another approach is to prioritize active recovery over more strenuous workouts. Gentle stretching, foam rolling, yoga, or even low-impact resistance exercises can help maintain flexibility and strength without the wear and tear of a full regimen. Incorporating light movement also serves as a way to manage holiday stress and keep energy levels steady,

allowing you to stay physically engaged while giving your body the chance to recharge.

During the holidays, commitments and social events often mean that regular training schedules become difficult to follow. Instead of holding yourself to a rigid routine, try embracing a more flexible approach. Creative, incidental activity—like a brisk walk with family, a quick morning workout, or even opting for stairs rather than elevators—can be a fun way to stay active amid holiday festivities. Flexibility not only keeps you moving but also allows you to enjoy the spontaneity of the season without feeling guilty about “missing” structured workouts.

Mindful eating is another tool for navigating holiday gatherings with confidence. Enjoying holiday meals is one of the joys of the season, but practicing mindfulness can help you stay in tune with your body's needs. Eating slowly, savoring flavors, and being mindful of hunger and fullness cues can prevent overeating while letting you fully enjoy treats. By approaching meals with intention, you'll find it easier to indulge without guilt or a feeling of setback, staying aligned with your goals.

Visualization techniques are also powerful tools that can be used even when physical training is scaled back. Taking a few minutes daily to visualize your performance, imagine perfect form, or mentally rehearse your sport can keep you connected to your goals. Research shows that visualization activates the same neural

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pathways as physical practice, helping maintain mental sharpness and readiness. This simple practice keeps you engaged with your goals in a relaxed way, giving you a mental edge when it's time to get back to full training.

Perhaps the most overlooked benefit of the holiday season is the chance to focus on rest and recovery. For many athletes, the holiday break offers an opportunity to prioritize quality sleep, relax, and engage in activities that recharge the mind and body. Proper rest is just as crucial to athletic performance as active training, and taking time to rejuvenate now will prepare you to return stronger and more energized.

Finally, the holidays can also serve as a time for reflection on your long-term goals. Reviewing past achievements, considering new aspirations, and aligning your short-term goals with your

broader vision can renew your sense of purpose and motivation, carrying you forward into the new year with fresh enthusiasm and clarity.

This season offers a valuable pause—a chance to both connect with loved ones and reconnect with yourself. By adjusting your expectations, embracing flexibility, and prioritizing balance, you can savor the holidays without compromising your athletic journey. Remember, this time is a part of the process, and using it to focus on rest, renewal, and reflection will ultimately support your athletic success in the year ahead. Enjoy the season, celebrate your progress, and set yourself up for a fulfilling year to come.

Dr. Kat Scardino, CMPC



Put Pen to Paper



List 3 ways you can try to relax this holiday break



List 3 goals for your next sports season

Meet Chloe Maleski, Certified Mental Performance Consultant



In this month's Staff Spotlight, we're thrilled to introduce Chloe Maleski, a key member of our team who recently achieved certification as a Certified Mental Performance Coach (CMPC).

Chloe's journey to earning this certification reflects her dedication, expertise, and passion for guiding others to reach their highest potential. With a wealth of experience as a mental fitness coach and holistic performance psychology consultant, Chloe brings a unique, integrative approach to helping clients enhance their mental, physical, and emotional performance.

Here, she shares insights into her journey and how this new certification enriches her work with clients.

A Path of Growth and Dedication

By: Chloe Malski

I'm excited to share that I've recently earned my certification as a Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC)! This journey was challenging and rewarding, and it marks a significant milestone in my career as a mental performance professional.

My background has always been rooted in helping individuals reach their full potential through a balance of mental and physical wellness. With this new certification, I'm more equipped than ever to serve my clients with depth, expertise, and a well-rounded approach.

The Path to Certification

The CMPC journey is rigorous by design, ensuring that those of us who earn it have not only theoretical knowledge but also practical experience in applying mental performance principles. I committed countless hours to studying, attending workshops, and working with mentors who guided me through case studies and real-life applications. The CMPC designation requires me to deepen my knowledge in sport psychology, mental skills training, and holistic performance enhancement techniques.

This journey was intense, but it also reinforced why I love this work: the chance to empower others to push past their limits, to foster resilience, and to help them find that extra edge in their performance. Each challenge I encountered along the way served as a reminder of the very obstacles my clients face, and it provided me with tools to help them in more nuanced and effective ways.

How This Certification Elevates My Work

- **Enhanced Expertise in Mental Skills Training:** As a CMPC, I now have advanced training in mental skills such as goal setting, focus, visualization, and emotional regulation. These tools enable me to work with clients on the specific psychological components that directly impact their performance. For athletes, performers, and professionals, the ability to control these factors can be transformative, allowing

them to approach their goals with clarity and confidence.

- **Improved Assessment and Strategy Development:** The certification process provided me with evidence-based methods to assess and analyze clients' unique mental performance needs. With this new knowledge, I can design tailored strategies that integrate cognitive, emotional, and physiological components. This comprehensive approach helps me meet clients where they are, providing a holistic plan that optimizes both their mental and physical resources.
- **Integrative Approach from a Holistic Perspective:** Having a background in holistic performance psychology, I've always believed that true performance enhancement involves aligning body, mind, and spirit. Now, as a CMPC, I can bring this vision to life with a structure grounded in science and clinical insights. My clients benefit from an approach that not only addresses their performance goals but also considers their overall well-being, leading to sustainable growth and development.

My Vision for the Future

With this new certification, I am excited to bring a more sophisticated level of support to my clients. Whether they're athletes seeking peak performance, professionals aiming to excel in their careers, or individuals pursuing personal growth, I can now offer them deeper insights, backed by a strong foundation in sports psychology and mental performance. My ultimate goal is to help people perform at their best while also prioritizing balance and fulfillment in their lives. This journey has been transformative, and I'm thrilled to bring these skills to my work, and help my client's achieve their dreams.

Chloe Maleski, CMPC

Dear Coaches:

By Joshua Lefkovitch, CMPC

As we approach the holiday season, it's important to remember that this time of year can bring a mix of emotions for our athletes. While the holidays are often associated with joy and celebration, they can also introduce stress, disruptions to routines, and heightened emotions that may affect performance and well-being.

Here are a few tips to help you support your athletes during this season:

- **Acknowledge the Balance:** Encourage athletes to enjoy time with family and friends while maintaining a healthy balance in their routines. A flexible approach to training during the holidays can help them stay motivated without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Foster Connection:** Use this season to build team camaraderie. Activities like a holiday-themed practice or a simple team check-in can strengthen bonds and provide a sense of belonging.

- **Support Mental Wellness:** Remind athletes that it's okay to feel a range of emotions. Sharing resources or even checking in one-on-one can show you care about their mental well-being beyond the sport.
- **Set Intentions for the New Year:** As the year comes to a close, encourage athletes to reflect on their growth and set goals for the upcoming season. This can be a powerful way to channel holiday energy into motivation for the future.

Thank you for all you do to guide your athletes, not just in sport but in life. Your leadership makes a difference, especially during meaningful times like this.

Wishing you a joyful and restorative holiday season!

Joshua Lefkovitch, CMPC



The Mental and Physical Benefits of Rest: A Holistic Approach

By Andrea Perales, AMFT

Rest plays a critical role in maintaining and enhancing both mental and physical well-being. In our fast-paced world, taking a break can often feel like a luxury, but it's actually a necessity for optimal functioning.

Mentally, rest sharpens our focus and memory by allowing the brain to process and organize information while clearing away unnecessary clutter. It also helps reduce stress by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, shifting us from "fight-or-flight" to a calmer "rest-and-digest" state.

This creates a sense of balance and emotional regulation, making it easier to handle challenges and maintain positive interactions. Physically, rest supports immune function, allowing the body to repair and strengthen, making us more resilient to illnesses. For athletes, it's a critical component of recovery, helping muscles heal and reducing the risk of overuse injuries, while also balancing key hormones like cortisol and ghrelin that influence stress, appetite, and energy levels. Incorporating rest doesn't have to be complex; prioritizing sleep, taking mindful breaks, and engaging in active recovery activities like yoga can make a huge difference. When we embrace rest as a vital part of our routines, we not only boost our mental and physical health but also enhance our relationships, productivity, and overall quality of life.

Rest reminds us to slow down, giving us the energy to be fully present in our daily experiences. It's not just about recharging—it's about creating a life with greater clarity and balance. By prioritizing rest, we empower ourselves to show up as our best, most resilient selves.

Andrea Perales, AMFT

