

# MENTAL HURDLES in PHYSICAL TRAINING

**GOALS MAY BE TOO STRICT** – When you start training for a race, you usually have one goal in mind; run a certain distance under a certain time. But what happens if you don't think you can reach that goal? Things can start to unravel quickly. Instead, **be flexible**. Have a back-up goal that you will be happy with. Then, have a back-up to that back-up. Example:

- Goal 1 – Finish the Race.
- Goal 2 – Run a sub 3:30 half marathon.
- Goal 3 – Run a sub 3-hour half marathon.

**“Everyone has a plan, until they get punched in the face.”**

**NOT FACING YOUR FEAR** – When training for a race, at some point you will have the fear of failure; of not achieving your goal. This is common; from beginners to elite runners. If you harbor those fears and keep them to yourself, they can manifest and grow. The trick is to accept that it's a possibility. Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. That way, if you do fail, it's easier to accept and move on. Also, talk about your fears with someone and you may find you're not alone. Remember, failure isn't failure unless you quit. It's an opportunity to learn and grow; to come back wiser and stronger the next time.



**DOUBTING YOUR ABILITY** – Trust your hard work! Have confidence that you did everything possible to achieve your goal. Remember all the time you've put in and the sacrifices you've made. Think about the workouts; getting up every Sunday morning in the bad weather to run all those miles. If you put in the hard work, everything else will take care of itself. And realize, there are some things that are out of your control like the weather, how many racers show up, if you get sick, etc. Focus on the things you can control and accept the things you can't.

**COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS** – Everybody is different, from our body types, genetics, jobs, goals, to the life you lead. We all have our own unique skills and we are all dealing with our own separate issues. If you are always trying to compare yourself to someone else, you will - more times than not - be disappointed. Your goals should be your own, not someone else's. If the reason you're doing something doesn't resonate with you on the most basic, personal level, you are more likely to quit.

**NEGATIVITY** – Sometimes, you can be your own worst enemy. It's easy to dwell on the aches and pains, the horrible weather, how tired you are, that hill! Then, you can start to question why you are doing this in the first place. The thought of quitting may not be far behind. When those negative thoughts start to creep into your head, combat them by searching for inspiration. Maybe it's a song that gets you pumped up, a motivational quote, reminding yourself of your goal, or you could just play the "it could be worse" game.

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE** – Think about what you would tell a friend if they told you they wanted to quit. What advice would you give them? Then, give yourself that same advice.

**KEEP A POSITIVE MIND** – Difficult to do but more effective. If you don't feel like running, think about the positive changes you are making in your life; becoming healthier, getting fit, improving your appearance and quality of life, etc. At the very least, remember you are doing something very few people in the U.S. would even attempt. On average, less than 2 million people finish a half marathon each year; that's only five-thousandths of the population. Whether you realize it or not, you may be an inspiration to someone who wants to do what you're doing but doesn't yet have the courage.

*focus on the good*