



Fall Newsletter

Hello everyone!

I hope you enjoyed a great summer with family and friends! Welcome to the chilly nights and Fall sports; cross country, football, field hockey, soccer, swimming, tennis, volleyball and wrestling.

Below is my recent article, along with September's post, if you missed them. Working with mind and body strategies, we can help to alleviate stress and gain confidence. Most athletes will achieve a greater capacity to sustain present moment experience, which translates into a more fluid body movement. I work with athletes, all skill levels in professional and recreational sports.

Mindfulness to achieve peak performance

If I could manage distractions during my sports performance, I'd be able to achieve my peak potential! Distraction and losing focus are very common experiences that athletes find challenging to manage. For example: A tennis player lost the last four games and, during the changeover, he starts having uncontrollable negative thoughts. Elizabeth is bound to shoot her best round of golf and, as she is about to tee off, she pays too much attention to the out of bounce on the right. Tom missed his first free throw and now must make the second one to tie the basketball game with one second left.

Regardless of how much we practiced, athletes are bound to feel the emotion of the game, especially when a significant achievement is on the line. Even top athletes feel the nervousness of the moment. A professional golf player will feel his knees shaking when playing in the Ryder Cup because he is representing his own country. Serena Williams succumbed to the pressure of wanting to win the Grand Slam when facing a fairly unknown rival.

The wanting to win as well as the fear of losing is felt in our bones, muscles and skin. As much as we would like to control the external factors that are part of competition, it is the internal distractions that lead our minds into wandering.



Upcoming Speaking Engagements

Lifetime Fitness;
Sport Psychology

When the mind is distracted, it follows scattered thoughts, negative scenarios or blank stares. The body responds by tensing up, sweating or shaking. Commonly executed shots, throws or pitches become so much

TBA October

Pyramid Squash:
Sport Psychology
TBA October

**Bronxville Adult
School**

Parenting/Coaching
Young Athletes:
Oct 15

Scarsdale Adult School
A 3-day Sport
Psychology class:
Oct 06-13-20

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[A lesson about tenacity
and focus](#)

[Serena Williams' lesson:
coping with pressures](#)

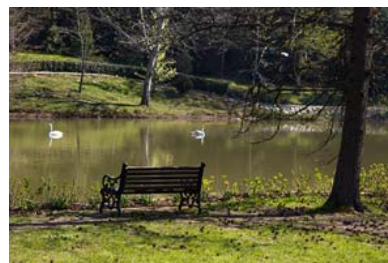
[False Confidence](#)

[Concussion: What you
need to know](#)

more difficult to do well. Regardless of our competitive level, we are bound to experience pressure situations. In fact, it is the effects of our emotions that we feel while playing the sport that we love that makes its mastery so much more challenging, fun, and frustrating.

It is common that we find ourselves giving "orders" to our thinking brain so it avoids troubles. "Don't double-fault now" or "don't hit it into the water." Unfortunately, the brain interprets such instructions by becoming even more aware of double-faulting and water. Contrary to our well intended message, the brain is channeling even more attention to either situation as they are both perceived as threats. On the other hand, if we said, "serve well," or "hit it over the water," the thinking brain is unable to consistently control all the multiple body parts necessary to always meet such an expectation.

So, how do we learn to manage distractions? Learning to master distractions rests on focusing in the present moment without judgment.



Being mindful helps us to see the behaviors that create our discomfort rather than impulsively react out of control. Rather than being overwhelmed by an unpleasant result or clinging on the highs that come from achieving a successful outcome, being mindful helps us to be less concerned with the final outcome and more present with the efforts that we put into achieving our goals. The experience of mindful acceptance helps us to enjoy the present moment where the critical mind is a brief episode rather than a permanent feature.

Novak Djokovic wrote, "Now, when I blow a serve or shank a backhand, I still get those flashes of self-doubt, but I know how to handle them. Mindfulness helps me process pain and emotions. It lets me focus on what's really important. It helps me turn down the volume in my brain. Imagine how handy that is for me in the middle of a grand slam championship match."

[CONTINUING READING CLICK HERE](#)

Resilience ≠ Mental Toughness

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks; **Mental Toughness** is being resilient **AND** having the confidence to succeed.



Alex Diaz, Ph. D.
Sports Mental Edge TM
Sports Psychology Consultant
Certified Performing Edge Coaching Professional
WWW.SPORTSMENTALEDGE.COM
68 Main Street, Suite 340
Tuckahoe, NY 10707
(914) 793-9719

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Sports Mental Edge | 68 Main Street | Tuckahoe | NY | 10707