



Playing in the “Zone” for Consistent Performances

You have learned the game, practiced the fundamentals, and mastered the techniques. Now, the key to achieving your athletic goals is consistency – consistency between practice and games, as well as consistency between regular games and “big” games. To achieve a state of athletic consistency, it is vital to understand the concepts of peak performance and playing in the zone.

Think about some of your past sporting experiences for a moment. Is there at least one special performance that really stands out? Remember how you felt, where you were, and with whom you were competing. That is what is called a “zone” experience. It is also referred to as “flow” or “peak performance”. Peak Performance is defined as a state in which our mind, body, and energy are operating in sync, allowing us to truly perform to the best of our abilities and talents.

How often do you experience this state? Does it just occur by chance or do you deliberately help yourself get there? Believe it or not, it is possible to train yourself to get into the zone more often than you think.

In order to know how to create this experience, it is equally important to have self-awareness of what it feels like to be in the zone, as well as when you are out of the zone. Most people describe being in the zone as focused, confident, on auto-pilot, clear-headed, relaxed (but not too relaxed), feel that they can predict the next move and can do nothing wrong. Most gold medalists and high level performers experiencing their best performances report having been in the zone.

Next, think about some of your worst performances and describe what that was like to yourself. What went wrong? Did you follow your game plan? Did you correct yourself after mistakes? How did your body feel? What were you saying to yourself (don’t worry, everyone talks to themselves). What distractions did you experience? I had a client recently who stated that he hadn’t experienced being in the zone since 1968, probably prior to most of you having even been born. Don’t let this happen to you!

Write down how you want to feel, which is completely personal and individualized. This is **your** performance, not your best friend’s or another teammate’s. Next, create a plan on how you are going to get there each and every time to allow yourself to consistently perform in the zone. Only when you understand where you are trying to go and how you want to feel, with consistency, are you going to be able to replicate this state prior to each performance as well as to re-center yourself when things are not going so well out there. Incorporating this into your regular team routine will allow for consistently great performances and help you attain the results you desire!

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As a high level competitive triathlete, marathon runner, Dr. Walker has faced the same challenges as many of you, and knows first-hand what it takes to reach your goals. Call Ignition today at (513) 247-9501 and get your game going!