



MOTIVATION

Motivation is the driving force behind an athlete's desire and determination to achieve their goals. Being motivated can help to ease the pressure and demands that come with being an elite athlete, particularly after a long competition season. Those who sustain their motivation over a longer period of time are likely to experience positive results.

To remain successful and cope effectively with the additional demands of success, you need to:

- > enjoy what you are doing
- > remember where you have come from
- > keep it all in perspective.

Some specific suggestions include the following:

- > know why you win, why you lose, and work hard towards achieving your goals
- > believe in yourself, think positively and stay on a track that has worked
- > be well-rested physically and mentally
- > avoid accepting the pressure of other people's expectations
- > create new challenges and let the politics of sport pass you by
- > work on the feeling aspect of your sport, be mentally prepared and keep the desire sharp
- > know what is important and what is not
- > perhaps most importantly, create a system for dealing effectively with the demands of being an elite athlete.

DEALING WITH DEMANDS

You will have a better chance of continuing to perform well and enjoy life if you respect the following guidelines:

Stay in control of your life

- > Set priorities for your time and activities
- > Take care of your own needs and the needs of your loved ones first (for example, rest, relaxation, proper nutrition, physical activity and simple joys)
- > Keep things in perspective

Set a plan for dealing with demands

- > Expect additional demands and create a system for dealing with them
- > Decide how many demands you can reasonably handle at different times of the year
- > Establish times when you are not available for any external demands, and stick to it
- > Approach demands that you want to accept as opportunities and set a reasonable time frame
- > Accept a reasonable number of demands that are important to you, and let the others go

Respect the patterns that allowed you to excel

- > Remember the basics about how you got to where you are now
- > Reflect on what allows you to excel (for example, hard work, adequate rest, believing in yourself, accepting new challenges, being well prepared mentally and physically, and enjoying what you are doing)

Plan strategies for dealing with distractions

- > Focus on what you want and on what you can control
- > Draw from the wisdom of others in planning your path (for example, other athletes, your coach or performance psychologist)

TAKE ACTION

To further develop this skill, contact your performance psychologist or the AIS Performance Psychology department.