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## Finding the Right Level of Motivation

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Many athletes I work with do not have the proper level of motivation because they let over-motivation or trying too hard get in the way of their performance. Although these athletes are hard-driven and highly motivated to practice and improve, that same motivation hurts them on the field and court. They often feel more comfortable performing in practice than in competition. Expectations are so high that they become easily frustrated and don't develop what I call "competitive" self-confidence. This article talks about the pitfalls of over-motivation and how you can find the proper level of motivation.

1. Reduce unwanted expectations. High expectations can only make athletes feel like a failure no matter how they perform. For example, it's just not realistic to expect to win every race you compete in. High expectations make athletes judge one's performance harshly all the time. You need to set attainable goals for practice and competition, ones you can reach and then feel successful.
2. Emphasize fun, not being perfect. Over-motivated athletes are often perfectionistic. Perfectionists are very hard on themselves in practice and competition. The tension and frustration you experience partially results from an overemphasis on trying to be perfect, which is impossible in sports. Athletes should strive to be perfect, but accept that they are imperfect beings. Try to have fun in practice and enjoy the moment when in competition.
3. Focus on what you did well. Over-motivated athletes spend a lot of time dwelling on the mistakes they make and their weaknesses. This is unhealthy for self-confidence and does not let them enjoy their sport. You are not a failure; You just choose to think more about your faults. You need to make the choice to think about what went well in practice today and remember the races instead of replaying the bad ones repeatedly in your mind.
4. Give yourself permission to make mistakes. Perfectionists think that anything less than a flawless practice or performance is a failure. You are human and will have bad days just like everyone else. Sometimes it helps to give yourself permission to make mistakes. Even the best athletes in the world make mistakes. Allow yourself the flexibility to make an error so you can race on without dwelling in the past or being too judgmental.
5. The goal of practice is to compete better. Many highly motivated athletes are stuck in a

practice mindset and often get too comfortable with "training" instead of performing. They love to practice, but this does not develop "competitive" self-confidence when it's time to compete. One of the goals of practice is to help you feel confident when you race. Athletes need to practice in a way that simulates real-life competition. This way you can develop confidence that you can perform well in competition and not just in practice.

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