



Get Ben's Mental Toughness

Six strategies to improve your own mental fitness

by Patrick Cohn, Ph.D | Photo by Ian Spanier

For the Pittsburgh Steelers' leader Ben Roethlisberger, toughness isn't about bulldozing over defenders. "[It's about] playing the worst game of your life but not backing down," says Roethlisberger. Improve your own mental [fitness](#) in the gym, on the field, or in the boardroom with these six strategies from Orlando-based sports [psychology](#) expert Patrick Cohn, Ph.D.

STAY CALM

Momentum shifts, such as interceptions, can be game-changers. When yours come, whether on the job or in your relationship, stay positive. Patience shows confidence: If the ball isn't bouncing your way, you know it will eventually.

RECOGNIZE, REGROUP, REFOCUS

Mistakes are inevitable, so don't dwell on them. Once you're able to accept this, you'll be able to refocus on your next move.

VARY YOUR [WORKOUTS](#)

Don't let boredom set in. Maintain the same focus and intensity in your training that you'd have in competition. That'll be easier if you're switching things up.

PUSH YOUR MIND

If you're trying to muster the energy to overcome a setback or finish a major project, try to block out any [pain](#) or fatigue. Don't allow mental [exhaustion](#) to throw off your mission.

PLAY TO WIN, NOT TO LOSE

Teams ahead on the scoreboard tend to get complacent. If things are going your way, continue to be aggressive and to stick to your game plan. Think about extending—not protecting—your lead.

BE RESILIENT

Success is not about being perfect right away. If you under perform in relation to your expectations, your confidence will be hit. Instead, focus on past accomplishments, which can't be erased. That forms the base of building back confidence.



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Read more about Ben in the Dec/Jan 2010 Issue of Men's Fitness. On sale now.