

Peak Performance

“I felt like I could do almost anything, as if I were in complete control. I really felt confident and positive. I felt physically very relaxed, but really energized and pumped up. I experienced virtually no anxiety or fear, and the whole experience was enjoyable. I experienced a very real sense of calmness and quiet inside and everything just seemed to flow automatically...even though I was really hustling, it was all very effortless.”



Psychological Characteristics of Peak Performance

- **Ability to manage fear and anxiety** – not excessively afraid to fail or to make mistakes
- **Little or no thinking about the performance** – perform with a clear and focused mind
- **Total immersion in the activity** – focus on the present rather than dwelling on past mistakes or worrying about the outcome of your performance
- **Narrow focus of attention** – learn to let go of internal and external distractions
- **Effortless performance** – “Trust yourself and let it happen.” Preparation time is over when you step into the lights. You need to be able to surrender to the moment and believe in yourself
- **Feeling of being in complete control** – your mind and body are in complete harmony and you find your unique performance rhythm
- **Mentally calm and physically relaxed** – quiet mind, inner calm, and free from muscle tension
- **Confident and optimistic** – positive thoughts including a belief in yourself and your ability to perform well
- **Positively energized** – an appropriate amount of activation...not too much, not too little
- **Fully engaged** – your senses are totally “tuned-in” to your performance environment. In fact, some performers are so “tuned-in” that they experience a type of performance amnesia. They can remember certain aspects of the performance in great detail, while not being able to recall other parts of the performance at all

Remember that peak performances are relatively rare occurrences when performers transcend their ordinary levels of play. Similar to the peaks of mountain ranges, some performances simply stand out above all the rest. Peak performances occasionally happen, but aren't forced.

The best athletes can learn to control the controllables and perform at consistently high levels while also setting the stage for peak performances to occur.

Peak Performance Formula (Control the Controllables)

**Peak Performance = Proper Physical Condition + Mastery of Strategy/Skills
+ Good Mental Preparation**

- **Physical condition:** strength & conditioning, health, nutrition, hydration, and recovery
- **Mastery of strategies/skills:** good game plan and within game adjustments, proper execution of basic fundamentals/techniques, effective teamwork
- **Mental preparation:** proper activation, competing with confidence and enjoyment, mindful engagement or focus

Reference:

Williams, J. M. (1993). *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Peak Performance: Mental Training Techniques of the World's Greatest Athletes. Garfield & Bennett, 1984

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