

Having an effective support network to support you in and out of sport



Preamble

The following psychological resource for participants and athletes, has been developed by sport psychologist Fiona McCarthy on behalf of the NSW Office of Sport, as a key initiative of the NSW Government's Future Champions strategy.

For more information on Future Champions, please visit www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development

Getting to know the author

Fiona McCarthy is a registered psychologist, specialising in sport psychology and is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists. Fiona owns and operates Mind and Body Balance, a business she established 25 years ago.

Fiona is the Hunter Academy of Sport, Sport Psychology Consultant and a New South Wales Institute of Sport, Sport Psychology Service Provider. Over the last twenty-

five years, Fiona has assisted many teams, athletes, parents and coaches in the areas of confidence, concentration, handling pressure, motivation, goal setting, time management, performance preparation and general well-being. Fiona has worked with numerous sports, assisting recreational level athletes to professional, international, Olympic and Paralympic level athletes, reach their full potential.



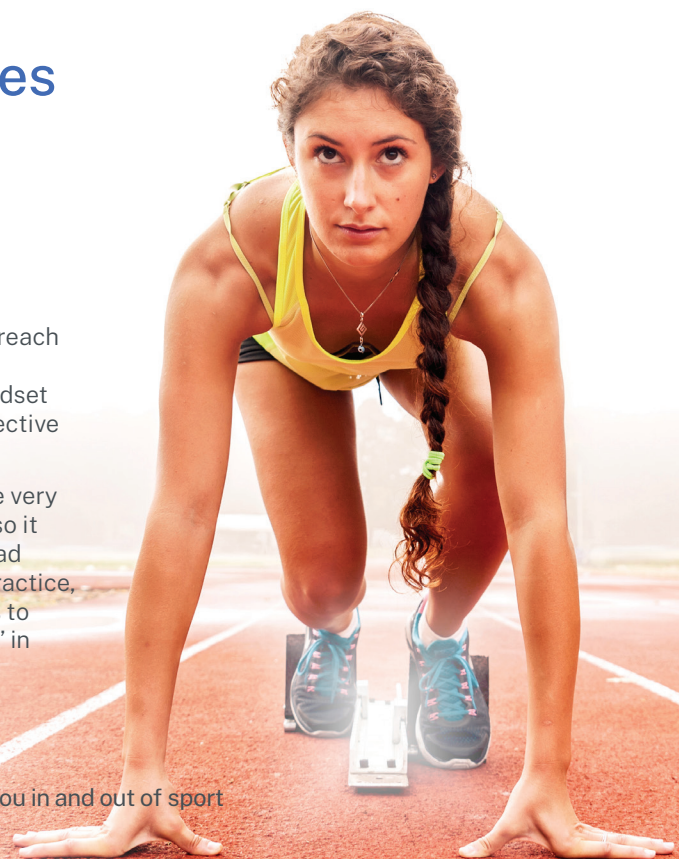
Background to these resources

The importance of having a mental 'tool kit' to support your learning, performance and engagement on and off the sporting field.

The following resources have been developed by Fiona McCarthy to assist athletes at all levels, in understanding the importance of having a suite of mental 'tools' at their disposal. These 'tools' are practical and multidimensional and will help athletes learn and develop the necessary mental skills they require to help them navigate their way through their sporting journey with a positive mindset and achieve success on and off the field.

It is well recognised that to reach the pinnacle within sport, an athlete needs a superior mindset consisting of strong and effective mental skills and strategies.

Importantly, mental skills are very intertwined and integrated, so it is recommended that you read about and put into regular practice, a number of these resources to strengthen the 'mental tools' in your kit bag!



Having an effective support network to support you in and out of sport.

An effective support network can look different for each athlete, however importantly, the purpose of such a network doesn't differ.

An **effective support network** is having a team of people that assist you with your sporting journey. They have skills in different areas and work together to complement your skills and assist you to perform at your best on and off the sports field.

People in your support network should be very clear on what their role is in supporting you and how to execute that role to the best of their ability.

People that may be involved in your support network could include your coach, teammates, parents, partner, friends, siblings, physiotherapists, dietician, massage therapist, sport psychologist, managers/agent, sponsors, performance analyst or strength and conditioning coach to name a few.

It is important to have a healthy support network so as to ease the load for yourself, gain insight, obtain guidance and appreciate different viewpoints and perspectives on issues relating to you and your sport.

Having your own 'A' team, can assist you greatly in performing at your best and support your sport-life balance as well (e.g., enjoying a laugh together or much needed time out from training and competition).

It is important that whoever you have in your corner, connect and communicate with each other so that everyone is on the same page to best support you.

For some people in your network, weekly meetings may be necessary for this to happen, for others it may be monthly or on an 'as needs' basis.

It is important for your physical and mental health that you strive to have **good sport-life balance** in your life, meaning that you have other interests, hobbies and commitments (e.g., school, work) that you engage in outside of your sport. Your support network can help you with this.

Having **regular 'time outs'** from your sport can also help prevent burnout and improve your motivation levels.

Having a great support network, that you trust, value their opinion and feel safe with, allows you to concentrate on looking after yourself and be the best version of yourself on and off the sports arena that you can be, allowing you to enjoy your sporting journey and reach your goals and aspirations.



We hope you liked our tips

Have FUN building your psychological skills and strategies and put them into practice in and out of sport!

Remember importantly, if you are unsure of any of these tips or require further advice, please talk to your Coach, Parent or consult a Sport Psychologist.

You might like to check out our NEW animated YouTube video, Developing your mental 'tool kit' to support you in and out of sport featured within the NSW Office of Sport's Pathways and Development webpages @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development>.

Check out more tips for Participants @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/social-and-recreational-sport-participants>

And our tips for Emerging and High-Performance Athletes @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/emerging-athletes>



**Future Champions -
Developing your
mental 'tool kit' to
support you in and out
of sport.**

Formal permission is required from the NSW Office of Sport to reproduce any of the information within this resource. Formal permission should be directed to the Office of Sport, 6B Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park. You are required to acknowledge that the material is provided by this document or the owner of the copyright. © State of NSW 2023