

# THE SUFFERFEST MENTAL TOUGHNESS PROGRAMME

BUILDING THE FOUR HABITS OF  
THE MENTALLY TOUGH



# IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE BY STRENGTHENING YOUR MENTAL TOUGHNESS

## DEAR SUFFERLANDRIAN,

Like you, I'm no stranger to Suffering. I know what it feels like to push myself to the edge, to test my limits. I know the desire to keep improving, to get better and do more.

And perhaps like you, I doubt myself more than I should. My motivation ebbs and flows. I wonder if I can.

I get nervous. I don't always learn from my experiences.

Sometimes my confidence seems as far away as the top of the next big climb. **I can feel strong physically, but not mentally.**

And probably like you, I've never seriously tried to change that.

But ask any coach or elite athlete and they'll tell you: The mind is even more important than the body. Building mental toughness is a key part of how they prepare for success.

We spend so much energy trying to emulate the pros – the way they train, the equipment they use, the clothes they wear, even the food they eat (we're looking at you, gummy bears) – but 99% of us don't even consider mental toughness as something worth focusing on.

Why is that? It's true we may not be vying for the top step of the podium on a grand tour, but we all have goals. We all want to improve and be successful in our own way.

**If anything, a strong mental game is even more important for those of us with full-time jobs, families, and limited time to train than it is for a professional athlete.**

And so we give you The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme, another part of our Complete Training System covering Bike-Body-Mind.

Developed with the leading sports psychologists at LifeSparq, as well as elite cycling coach Neal Henderson and his coaching team at APEX Coaching, I'm extremely excited about this programme. We've worked hard to demystify Mental Toughness, giving you **simple, practical and useful ways to develop a powerful mental game.**

Having gone through the programme myself, it's changed how I approach workouts, how I deal with Suffering, and how motivated I am to get the work in. Above all, it's helped me think more positively about my capabilities.

And so, over the next nine weeks, we're going to do the same for you. And just imagine what you can accomplish when you truly, deeply know what you want, why you want it and have the conviction that you can do it.

Believe in yourself. You **can** do it.

**IWBMATTKYT,**

**David McQuillen**  
**Founder & Chief Suffering Officer**  
**The Sufferfest**



# WHAT IS MENTAL STRENGTH & HOW WILL THIS PROGRAMME HELP YOU DEVELOP IT?

## THE WHAT

It's what makes you **get out of bed** early to train when you'd rather hit snooze for another 15 minutes.

It's **what makes you hang on**, when your body tells you to give up.

It's the **clarity** of knowing exactly what you want, why you want it and how you're going to accomplish it.

It's the **resilience** that allows you to bounce back from injuries and set-backs.

It's **learning** from both your mistakes and your successes so you can keep improving.

It's the **calm** that comes with being organised and adaptable.

It's the **focus** that allows you to dig deeper, push harder and reach farther than you thought possible.

It's being **disciplined** and **prepared**.

It's wholly **responsible** for what you achieve.

It's **believing that you can. No matter what.**

## THE HOW

This programme will help you build your mental strength by putting in place the **four habits of the mentally tough** (which we'll talk more about on the following pages).

We've focused on practical, common sense activities. Many of these activities will be things you'll already know you should be doing. Some will be new to you. All will be useful.

We'll start you off gradually, helping you get clarity on the things that are important to you. We'll give you some tasks to complete and some simple systems to put in place.

As time goes on, you'll build upon what you've learned. You'll add to your skills, deepen habits and strengthen convictions. You'll find your confidence growing and discover new, positive ways to think about yourself.

When you're done with all the modules, you'll be a different person than when you started.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME BY COACH NEAL HENDERSON

Welcome to The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme.  
I'm Neal Henderson, founder of APEX Coaching and your coach here at The Sufferfest.

In addition to being the chief architect of The Sufferfest workouts and training plans, I've also worked with some of the most successful cyclists in the world. Athletes like Taylor Phinney, hour-record holders Evelyn Stevens and Rohan Dennis, as well as multiple national champions, world champions, and Olympic medalists.

**The successful athlete is the one who is clearest about their goals, has unwavering focus, reflects on their performances and tries to improve, and approaches every day with a positive mindset. These are the Four Habits of the Mentally Tough and we're going to build them in you.**

Whether you're racing or just trying to improve your riding, you will benefit from the techniques and exercises the pros use to sharpen their mental game.

This programme will give you a clear sense of purpose, stronger motivation, and a greater sense of self-confidence. By training your mind you'll be able to more effectively train your body, become a truly complete athlete and accomplish things you didn't even realise you were capable of.

Now it's time to act.

First, if you're reading this online, you need to download and print this workbook. At the start of each week, I'll provide an overview of the coming week here in the workbook, including what we'll be covering and why those topics are important to a strong mental game.

Congratulations on starting this programme.

You're already a step ahead of everyone else.





**Neal Henderson**  
**Founder of APEX Coaching &**  
**Head Coach of The**  
**Sufferlandrian National Team**





# IT'S TIME TO BUILD THE FOUR HABITS OF THE MENTALLY TOUGH

We've identified four key habits of the mentally tough: **Goal Setting, Review & Improve, Strong Focus and Positive Thinking**. This programme will help you cultivate these habits and establish the foundation for a strong mental game – transforming your performance both on and off the bike.

| THE FOUR HABITS OF THE MENTALLY TOUGH   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  GOAL SETTING  |  REVIEW & IMPROVE   |  STRONG FOCUS  |  POSITIVE THINKING   |
| <p>Having a clear plan of action is essential to any undertaking. Setting concrete, actionable goals will keep you motivated and on track, whether you're eyeing the top step of the podium or the top of the local climb.</p> <p>We'll help you figure out where you are today, where you want to be, and identify the steps you need to take in order to get there.</p> | <p>As Plato said, 'An unexamined life is not worth living.'</p> <p>Reflecting upon and improving your performance will ensure you're moving forward and allow you to make corrections early if you start to go off track.</p> <p>These sessions will help you build a strong habit of thinking critically about what you're doing, how it's working, and what you can do better.</p> | <p>Focus is essential to high performance.</p> <p>Without it, you can become distracted, give in to self-doubt and lose motivation.</p> <p>These sessions will give you the mental skills to lock-in concentration, stay motivated, deal with setbacks and get 'in the zone' when it really counts.</p> | <p>Thoughts matter. To accomplish big goals you need the ability to maintain a positive mindset, regardless of what life throws at you.</p> <p>These sessions will introduce a series of techniques that will help you believe in yourself. You'll learn how to overcome obstacles, push aside negative thoughts, and build your self-confidence.</p> |

# HOW TO USE SUFFERFEST MENTAL TOUGHNESS PROGRAMME

## WHO IT'S FOR:

Anyone who wants to improve their athletic performance. This isn't just for competitive cyclists or racers, but for anyone who wants to be more focused, driven, motivated, and successful.

## WHAT IT INCLUDES:

- A series of modules in Sufferfest app. They are audio with subtitles.
- This workbook, which contains the schedule and exercises you'll need to complete.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- The Sufferfest app.
- A printed copy of this workbook. We recommend putting it in a binder to keep things organised.
- Sticky notes & tape.
- Something to write with.
- A training plan. Technically this isn't required but we recommend it. Training plans provide a good framework for your workouts and goals. Don't have one? The Sufferfest app includes a library of plans for all experience levels and disciplines.

## HOW LONG IT TAKES:

The main part of the programme takes nine weeks to complete. For those focusing on a specific race or ride, we also have a set of modules for the week of your event.

## HOW MUCH TIME YOU NEED:

Some days you'll only need a few minutes. Other days will require more. But, as with any physical workout, you'll get out of it what you put in, so be sure to listen carefully to the modules and give the exercises the attention that they - and you - deserve.

## WHEN TO START:

We designed the programme to start on **the first Monday of the month**. We know you're dying to get going, and if you can't wait, then just work according to a four week cycle.

## WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING:

Every week you'll have one or two modules to listen to and reflect upon. Most modules have corresponding exercises that will put the concepts discussed into practice and help you build better habits. Some of the exercises require completing pages in this workbook. Others may be specific visualization or relaxation routines. We'll mix it up, but see the schedule on page 5 and the check list on page 6 to keep you on track.

## ABOUT THE SCHEDULE:

We've organised the modules such that each one builds upon what you've done before. The sequence and spacing between modules is important and designed to give you time to implement the concepts introduced in one module before moving on to the next. We know that life sometimes gets in the way, so if you happen to miss a session, don't worry. Start back as soon as you can and

# THE PATH TO MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Read the weekly overview in this workbook before you start each week so you can plan accordingly. We recommend you follow the schedule as closely as possible. **If you can't listen to a module on the exact day specified, don't worry.** Just complete each week's modules and exercises in sequence. Do the work, and you'll see results.

| Week/Day    | Monday   | Tuesday | Wednesday                                   | Thursday                     | Friday  | Saturday                            | Sunday                       |
|-------------|--|---------|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1           | Identifying your Mt. Sufferlandria (35 mins)   |         |   |                              | Establishing the Goal Setting Habit (20 mins) |                                     |                              |
| 2           | Getting Positive (15 mins)                     |         |   | Remembering Why (25 mins)    |   |                                     |                              |
| 3           | Relaxing to Recover (25 mins)                  |         |   | Positive Self-Talk (20 mins) |   |                                     |                              |
| 4           | Improving Focus & Focus Exercise (10 + 5 mins) |         |   |                              |   |                                     |                              |
| 5           | First Month Review & Improve (30 mins)         |         |   |                              |   |                                     |                              |
| 6           | The Successful Training Habit (20 mins)        |         |   | Workout Review (10 mins)     |   |                                     |                              |
| 7           | Kicking Ass in your Sleep Part 1 (20 mins)     |         |   | Future You is Now (20 mins)  |   |                                     |                              |
| 8           | Kicking Ass in your Sleep Part 2 (10 mins)     |         |   |                              |   |                                     |                              |
| 9           | Regular Monthly Review (30 mins)               |         |   |                              | Overcoming Obstacles (15 mins)                |                                     |                              |
| Event Week* | Setting Event Goals (20 mins)                  |         | Planning For Every Event Scenario (15 mins) |                              |   | Event Day                           |                              |
|             |  |         |   |                              |   | Preparing to Shred Chamois (9 mins) | How Did it Go? (15 mins x 2) |

\* Event Week should be listened to the week that you have a big goal, event or race.



# MENTAL TOUGHNESS MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme includes 20 modules to complete. Here's an overview of what you'll gain from each.

| Week  | Module                              | Habit   | Description  |
|-------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1     | Identifying your Mt. Sufferlandria  |    | Gain clarity on who you are as an athlete and what your major goal—your 'Personal Mt. Sufferlandria—really is.   |
|       | Establishing the Goal Setting Habit |    | Ensure constant progress by creating a habit of identifying monthly and weekly goals, with weekly rewards for achieving those goals.   |
| 2     | Getting Positive                    |    | Overview of the power of a positive mindset. We'll introduce specific tools to help you identify negative thoughts, stop them and take a more positive path forward.                         |
|       | Remembering Why                     |    | Strengthen your willpower through a deep understanding of your key motivators as you strive for your personal Mt. Sufferlandria.   |
| 3     | Relaxing to Recover                 |    | Boost your recovery with this guided meditation and full-body relaxation exercise.   |
|       | Positive Self-Talk                  |    | Improve your confidence and performance through three types of positive self-talk: Motivational, Instructional and Reward.   |
| 4     | Improving Focus                     |    | Develop an understanding of why focused concentration is so important to your performance.   |
|       | Focus Exercise                      |   | Quick pre-workout exercise to improve your ability to focus and help you get the most out of your training sessions.   |
| 5     | First Month Review & Improve        |  | A look back at the past month to see what was done well and what could be better. Set a new goal for the month ahead.  |
| 6     | The Successful Training Habit       |  | Get the most out of your training by identifying how you can improve your pre-, during and post- workout routines.   |
|       | Workout Review                      |  | Review your performance during individual workouts and identify areas for improvement.   |
| 7     | Kicking Ass In Your Sleep Part 1    |  | Introduction to pre-sleep visualisation as a tool to build confidence and willpower. Includes an exercise to detail what it will feel like to stand on the summit of your Mt. Sufferlandria. |
|       | The Future You is Now               |  | Determine who you need to be to accomplish your major goal and take action to be that person now.  |
| 8     | Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 2    |  | Boost confidence and willpower with this pre-sleep visualisation exercise.   |
| 9     | Regular Monthly Review              |  | Look back at the past month to see what went well and what could be improved upon.   |
|       | Overcoming Obstacles                |  | Rainbows? Puppy dogs? Not always. Sometimes things go wrong and this session will get you moving again.  |
| Event | Setting Event Goals                 |  | Get clear on what an event really means to you and what your event-specific goals are.   |
|       | Planning for Every Event Scenario   |  | Show up prepared by identifying things that could happen during the course of the event and how to deal with them.   |
|       | Preparing to Shred Chamois          |  | Boost your focus and determination with this pre-event visualisation exercise.   |
|       | How Did it Go?                      |  | Improve subsequent performances by taking a look back at your event.   |



# WEEK 1 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                                       | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday  | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--|---------|-----------|----------|---|----------|--------|
| 1        | Identifying your Mt. Sufferlandria (35 mins) |         |           |          | Establishing the Goal Setting Habit (20 mins) |          |        |

“Well, here we go! Welcome to Week 1 of The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme. You know, the very first thing I do when meeting with an athlete is to have them talk honestly about how they see themselves, where they are now, and what they want to accomplish.

You see, clear goals are the foundation of performance. It’s the base that all of the hard work to come will build on. Without goals you can’t be effective with your training and you can’t judge progress. So this week, we’re focusing exclusively on Goal Setting.

You should do the first module, “**Identifying Your Mount Sufferlandria**,” early in the week. Here, you’re going to take a good, hard look at who you are right now as an athlete.

You’ll be asked to step out of your comfort zone – to dream big.

As you do, you’ll also learn how to articulate your goals in a way that makes them real, achievable, and motivating.

Toward the end of the week, you should complete “**The Goal Setting Habit**.” In this session you’ll take the techniques you just learned and use them to identify smaller, intermediate goals. Establishing a consistent practice of setting concrete, achievable goals will serve you well not just in your athletic pursuits, but in every aspect of your life.

By the end of this first week you’ll find a new sense of conviction and confidence about what you’re striving towards. You’ll have mechanisms in place to keep you on track and stay motivated. It’ll be a little challenging but also incredibly enlightening and rewarding.”

| Week 1 Checklist  |      |
|---|------|
| Task  | Done |
| Listen to “Identifying Your Mt. Sufferlandria” & complete exercises.  |      |
| Listen to “Establishing the Goal Setting Habit” & complete exercises. |      |

**Coach Neal Henderson**  
**Founder of APEX Coaching &**  
**Head Coach of The**  
**Sufferlandrian National Team**



Complete this for the “Identifying Your Mt.  
Sufferlandria” module.

## WHO ARE YOU TODAY?

Today is \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ is a Sufferlandrian who:

Complete these sections after you listen to ‘Future You is Now’ later in the programme.

## THE NEW YOU

Today is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
is a Sufferlandrian who:

## THE FUTURE YOU

\_\_\_\_\_ will conquer Mt.  
Sufferlandria on \_\_\_\_\_ and be a person who:

# GETTING CLEAR ON GOALS

Use for  
"Identifying Your  
Mt. Sufferlandria,"  
in Week 1.

| DRAFT GOALS | SMART REFINED GOALS |
|-------------|---------------------|
|             |                     |
|             |                     |
|             |                     |
|             |                     |
|             |                     |
|             |                     |

**REFINE YOUR GOALS WITH THE SMART CHECK:**

- **S is for Specific** - Your goals should have a specific outcome. For example: 'A top result in a big time trial' is not specific. 'Riding the state championships time trial in under 60 minutes' is.
- **M is for Measurable** - Just saying, "A top result" doesn't cut it. Better is "Finishing in the top 5%."
- **A is for Achievable** - As a Sufferlandrian, you can surely do things that mere mortals only dream of. But a light touch of realism about your goals is important. It should be something that while seemingly impossible today, you can just about make happen in the future with a lot of hard work and dedication.
- **R is for Relevant** - Are these goals you care about? Are they ones you think you should have or are they what others want for you? To be effective, your goals have to be yours alone...ones you want so badly you're willing to put in the time and effort to make them happen.
- **T is for Time-bound**: Set concrete deadlines for each of the goals you've written down. Without those dates, you can't develop an effective plan for success.

# MY MT. SUFFERLANDRIA

Use for  
“Identifying Your  
Mt. Sufferlandria”  
and “The Future  
You is Now.”

## MY MT. SUFFERLANDRIA IS:

## OTHER KEY GOALS ARE:

# MONTHLY & WEEKLY GOALS

Use for  
“Establishing the  
Goal Setting Habit”  
and “First Month  
Review &  
Improve.”

MONTH:

|              | GOAL | REWARD | ACHIEVED | NOTES |
|--------------|------|--------|----------|-------|
| Monthly Goal |      |        |          |       |
| Week 1 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 2 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 3 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 4 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 5 Goal  |      |        |          |       |

Two things that were amazing this month:

Two things to focus on next month:



# MONTHLY & WEEKLY GOALS

Extra Sheet for additional months.

Use for “Establishing the Goal Setting Habit” and “First Month Review & Improve.”

MONTH:

|              | GOAL | REWARD | ACHIEVED | NOTES |
|--------------|------|--------|----------|-------|
| Monthly Goal |      |        |          |       |
| Week 1 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 2 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 3 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 4 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 5 Goal  |      |        |          |       |

Two things that were amazing this month:

Two things to focus on next month:

# MONTHLY & WEEKLY GOALS

Extra Sheet for additional months.

Use for “Establishing the Goal Setting Habit” and “First Month Review & Improve.”

MONTH:

|              | GOAL | REWARD | ACHIEVED | NOTES |
|--------------|------|--------|----------|-------|
| Monthly Goal |      |        |          |       |
| Week 1 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 2 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 3 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 4 Goal  |      |        |          |       |
| Week 5 Goal  |      |        |          |       |

Two things that were amazing this month:

Two things to focus on next month:

# WEEK 2 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                        | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday                     | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| 2        | Getting Positive<br>(15 mins) |         |           | Remembering Why<br>(25 mins) |        |          |        |

“Last week you learned that to be successful you need to set concrete, actionable goals and you identified the one thing you want to accomplish more than anything else: your Mount Sufferlandria. You also laid the foundation for a strong goal-setting habit by identifying monthly and weekly goals (and rewards!) that will help you maintain momentum.

Now, If you haven't done so already, take some time today to review your goal from last week, and reward yourself if you hit that target. If you fell a little short, don't get discouraged...just commit fully to whatever goal and reward you set for the upcoming week.

This week, we're going to focus on two of the other habits: Positive Thinking and Strong Focus. First up is '**Getting Positive**', which you should complete early in the week. As simple as it sounds, maintaining a positive mindset is one of the most important drivers of your self-confidence. But it needs practice, so we'll introduce you to a couple of easy-to-use techniques that will help you stop negative thoughts and maintain a more positive outlook.

Motivation is especially critical to mental strength. So, toward the end of the week you'll complete "**Remembering Why**" where you'll uncover the underlying motivations driving you towards the summit of your personal Mount Sufferlandria.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 2 Checklist                                     |      |
|--|------|
| Task   | Done |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set a new one.         |      |
| Listen to “Getting Positive” and practice exercises. |      |
| Listen to “Remembering Why” and complete exercises.  |      |

**“Nothing can stop the person with the right mental attitude from achieving their goal; nothing on earth can help the one with the wrong mental attitude.”**

- **Thomas Jefferson**

# USE THE THOUGHT STOPPAGE TECHNIQUE TO MOVE FORWARD DOWN A POSITIVE PATH

This page is for Week 2's "Getting Positive." Hang it up in your training area so you'll remember the

1. You can clearly see your Mt. Sufferlandria. You know what your goal is and how to get there.



2. When things get tough, a negative mindset can put obstacles in your way and prevent you from moving forward.



3. When this happens, picture a stop sign in front of that obstacle or negative thought. Block it out.



4. Identify the first thing you need to do to take the more positive path. Then do it.

# REMEMBERING WHY

This page is for Week 2's "Remembering Why." Cut up and place somewhere you'll see them every day.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Because:</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> | <p><b>Because:</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> | <p><b>Because:</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> |
|--|--|--|



# WEEK 3 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                           | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday                        | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|----------------------------------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| 3        | Relaxing to Recover<br>(25 mins) |         |           | Positive Self-Talk<br>(20 mins) |        |          |        |

“This week we’re going to shift gears and start by focusing on an aspect of mental health that is often overlooked: relaxation. Proper recovery is essential to allow both your body and your mind to adapt to the loads and stresses of physical training.

“**Relaxing to Recover**,” which you’ll complete on Tuesday, takes you through a full ‘Progressive Muscle Relaxation’ session. It’s part guided meditation, part focus exercise. You should listen to it at least once a week to get in tune with your body, release tension and maximise recovery.

In the second half of the week, you’ll add another arrow to your quiver of positive thinking with “**Positive Self-Talk**.” Here, we’ll look at the subtle and not-so-subtle effects that words have on our attitude and performance. You’ll listen more closely to the way you talk to yourself so you can improve that internal dialogue and become your own biggest fan.

Oh, and don’t forget to stay on top of your weekly goal setting. If you hit your goal last week, make sure you reward yourself. You deserve it.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 3 Checklist                                      |      |
|---|------|
| Task  | Done |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set a new one.          |      |
| Continue to practice Thought Re-Direction exercise.   |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover.”                      |      |
| Listen to “Positive Self-Talk” and complete exercise. |      |

**“If you hear a voice within you say ‘you cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.”**

- **Vincent van Gogh**

# POSITIVE SELF-TALK

This page is for  
Week 3's "Positive  
Self-Talk."

| SESSION   | TYPE OF SELF-TALK | WHAT YOU SAID TO YOURSELF | HOW TO IMPROVE IT |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| WORKOUT 1 | Motivational      |                           |                   |
|           | Instructional     |                           |                   |
|           | Reward            |                           |                   |
| SESSION   | TYPE OF SELF-TALK | WHAT YOU SAID TO YOURSELF | HOW TO IMPROVE IT |
| WORKOUT 2 | Motivational      |                           |                   |
|           | Instructional     |                           |                   |
|           | Reward            |                           |                   |
| SESSION   | TYPE OF SELF-TALK | WHAT YOU SAID TO YOURSELF | HOW TO IMPROVE IT |
| WORKOUT 3 | Motivational      |                           |                   |
|           | Instructional     |                           |                   |
|           | Reward            |                           |                   |

# WEEK 4 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday   | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| 4        | Improving Focus & Focus Exercise (10 + 5 mins) |         |           |          |        |          |        |

“As you’ve learned, positive words create positive mindsets. The words we use matter, especially the words we use when we talk to ourselves. So don’t forget about removing negative self talk...wait a second....See? Even I do it. Let me try that again, this time using positive words...(ahem). Be sure to use positive self talk to drive your performance to new levels. That’s better.

Here in Week 4, we’re entirely entirely focused on,...well, focus. Training is one thing. Performing under pressure is another. You could be the strongest cyclist on the starting line, but if you’re distracted—if you let the pain get in the way of what you’re trying to achieve—you’re not going to perform at your peak.

The modules for this week are structured a little differently and you’ll do them back-to-back right before a workout. “**Improving Focus**” will delve into what it means to be in “The Zone”. We’ll look at the psychology and the physiology of peak performance, and what it takes to get there. The next module, the “**Focus Exercise**,” is designed to be completed right before your workout. It’s a five-minute exercise that will get you primed and ready to unleash the Sufferlandrian within. That means you should be in your kit ready to Suffer as soon as you complete the exercise.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 4 Checklist   |      |
|--|------|
| Task   | Done |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set a new one.                           |      |
| Continue to practice Thought Re-Direction exercise.                    |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.                  |      |
| Continue review of self-talk exercise.                                 |      |
| Listen to “Improving Focus” and the “Focus Exercise” before a workout. |      |

**“Always remember that you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”**

- **Christopher Robin**

# WEEK 5 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                                 | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| 5        | First Month Review & Improve (30 mins) |         |           |          |        |          |        |

“As we move into the second half of the ten-week course you should have a solid grounding in the key habits that are critical to mental strength. With a month of consistent, weekly goal setting under your belt and your first monthly goal completed you know how to set those little milestones that will keep you on track and motivated as you continue to climb towards the summit of your Mount Sufferlandria.

You know the importance of positive thinking and self-talk to help you perform to your best. Thought-redirection should now be second nature, something you do reflexively anytime those negative thoughts start to intrude. When you need to relax or to focus on the task ahead, you have the tools at your disposal.

With so much behind you, now is the perfect opportunity to take a step back, turn around and take a look down the path to see how far you’ve come. What’s working? What isn’t? What else could you do to be more effective with your training?

In this week’s module you’ll complete the “**Monthly Review and Improve**” assessment. You’ll look back at each of your weekly goals, as well as your overall goal for the month, to see how you did. This is your chance to give yourself a pat on the back, celebrate your successes and identify how you’re going to do even better.

After looking to see what the past month can teach you you’re going to turn your attention towards what lies ahead, setting new monthly and weekly goals.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 5 Checklist   |      |
|--|------|
| Task   | Done |
| Listen to “First Month Review & Improve” and complete exercises. |      |
| Continue to practice Thought Re-Direction exercise.              |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.            |      |
| Listen to “Focus Exercise” before workouts.                      |      |

**“Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement.”**

- **Golda Meir**

# WEEK 6 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                                  | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday                 | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|---|---------|-----------|--------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| 6        | The Successful Training Habit (20 mins) |         |           | Workout Review (10 mins) |        |          |        |

“Last week you completed your first monthly Review and Improve. Before we look at what this week has in store you should make sure you’re getting your regular tasks done:

- First, be sure to review last week’s goal, reward yourself if you achieved it, and set a new goal for the week ahead.
- Try to get in the Relaxing to Recover module once this week to help you recover and build focus.
- Keep working on that positive self-talk.
- Finally, don’t forget to continue your regular pre-workout focus exercise.

This week, in “**The Successful Training Habit**,” we’ll zoom in on how you actually train, day in and day out.

You see, great training sessions don’t just happen. You have to make a conscious effort, get everything together, and then actually do the work. Successful athletes don’t leave their training to chance. They have a specific routine they go through. Every. Single. Time. The more deliberate you are with your thoughts and actions before, during, and after your workout, the better your training habit becomes and the greater your progress.

As you begin to build better habits around your workouts we’re going to take the techniques you learned during the Monthly Review and Improve module and apply them to individual training sessions. So towards the end of this week you’ll listen to the “**Workout Review**” module. This session should be completed immediately after you finish a given workout. If your training plan has Thursday as a day off, then listen to this one whenever your next workout is scheduled. You should have your workbook with you so you can go straight from your cool-down to the exercise described in the module.

Oh, and make sure you have a towel. Ink and Sufferlandrian Holy Water don’t mix.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 6 Checklist   |      |
|--|------|
| Task   | Done |
| Continue to practice Thought Re-Direction exercise.              |      |
| Listen to “The Successful Training Habit” and complete exercise. |      |
| Listen to “Workout Review” and complete exercise.                |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.            |      |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set new one.                       |      |

**“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”**

- **Benjamin Franklin**



# MY TRAINING HABIT

This page is for  
Week 6: "The  
Successful Training  
Habit"

| CURRENT TRAINING HABIT    |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Before Workout (Starters) | During Workout (Activity) | After Workout (Rewards) |
|                           |                           |                         |
|                           |                           |                         |
|                           |                           |                         |

| SUCCESSFUL TRAINING HABIT |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Before Workout (Starters) | During Workout (Activity) | After Workout (Rewards) |
|                           |                           |                         |
|                           |                           |                         |
|                           |                           |                         |

# WORKOUT REVIEW

This page is for  
Week 6: "Workout  
Review"

| DATE | WORKOUT | FOCUS | BEST ASPECT | WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED? |
|------|---------|-------|-------------|-----------------------|
|      |         |       |             |                       |
|      |         |       |             |                       |
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|      |         |       |             |                       |

# WEEK 7 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                                     | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday                    | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| 7        | Kicking Ass in your Sleep Part 1 (20 mins) |         |           | Future You is Now (20 mins) |        |          |        |

“You’ve spent the last six weeks learning the skills and techniques to build a strong foundation in the four key habits that create mental toughness. Your weekly and monthly goal setting routine should be well-established by now.

It might still feel a bit odd, but the pre-workout focus exercise is as important as proper warmup, You wouldn’t jump right into The Omnium without getting your legs ready. Getting your mind ready is just as critical. So you should be performing the pre-workout focus exercise we introduced back in Week 4 before every workout. Once you have the exercise memorized, though, there’s no need to listen to the audio -- you can just go through the routine.

This week we’ll continue to strengthen your focus and goal setting habits. Early in the week, listen to “**Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 1.**” This is a part visualization and part writing exercise, so you’ll need your workbook and something to write with. You’ll be asked to reflect more deeply on your personal Mount Sufferlandria and feel what it’s like to stand on that summit. At the beginning of next week you’ll take this description and use it to complete the Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 2 exercise.

The second module for this week, “**Future You Is Now,**” will have you revisit the description of yourself that you wrote when you first embarked on this journey. It’s an opportunity to see how far you’ve come, but also a chance to look ahead. You’re going to write the profile of who you want to be in the future so you can start being that person right now. You’ll need your workbook, something to write with, a few small pieces of paper, and some tape.

You’ve grown so much as an athlete over the past six weeks...and you’re only just getting started.

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 7 Checklist  |      |
|---|------|
| Task  | Done |
| Listen to “Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 1” and complete exercise. |      |
| Listen to “The Future You is Now” and complete exercise.            |      |
| Continue reviewing workouts.  |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.               |      |
| Listen to “Focus Exercise” before workouts.                         |      |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set new one.                          |      |

**“First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.”**

- **Epictetus**

# STANDING ON MT. SUFFERLANDRIA

This page is for  
Week 7's "Kicking  
Ass in Your Sleep  
Part 1."

**THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS, FEELS AND SOUNDS LIKE TO STAND ON THE SUMMIT OF MY PERSONAL MT. SUFFERLANDRIA**

# WEEK 8 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                                     | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| 8        | Kicking Ass in your Sleep Part 2 (10 mins) |         |           |          |        |          |        |

“Can you believe we’re already nearing the end of the programme? At this point, you should be feeling more confident, determined and motivated than ever before. You’ve been doing some great work to get this far, and the benefits will remain for months and years to come.

I want to quickly review your assignments thus far and make sure that you’re on track with your daily and weekly exercises”

- Positive self-talk should be something you are practicing every day.
- Keep tracking those weekly and monthly goals and rewards.
- You should also have a system in place, whether it’s an app or a stack of cards, to remind you why you’re working so hard for your big goal.
- Your pre-workout focus exercise should be an integral part of your routine, like putting on your kit or filling your bottles.
- And, with the clear picture of Future You that you created last week, you should be looking for ways to become that person you aspire to, always asking yourself ‘What would future me do?’
- Lastly, you should be wrapping up your workout review exercises if you’re not done yet.

Well, just like you need a rest and recovery week after a hard block of training, the mental toughness load for this week is light. Last week you completed Part 1 Kicking Ass in Your Sleep. Over the course of the past few days you should have taken some time to refine your Mt. Sufferlandria description. In doing so, you should now be intimately familiar with your description, almost so you could recite it from memory. The reason why will become clear when you listen to “**Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 2.**”

This is a visualization exercise, and is designed to be completed when you’re in bed, ready to fall asleep. You’ll be taking yourself out of your bedroom and onto the summit of your Mount Sufferlandria. Visualization can have a profound effect on performance, creating strong neural pathways and a sense of inevitability that will keep you motivated and focused, especially when things get challenging. So try to do this module a couple of times a week for the next month to really burn that picture of your success into your mind and create a deep source of motivation that you can draw from going forward.”

| Week 8 Checklist  |      |
|---|------|
| Task  | Done |
| Refine picture of standing on Mt. Sufferlandria                     |      |
| Listen to “Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 2” and complete exercise. |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.               |      |
| Review weekly goal/reward and set new one.                          |      |

**“It is not the mountain that we conquer, but ourselves.”**

**- Sir Edmund Hillary**



# WEEK 9 OVERVIEW & CHECKLIST

| Week/Day | Monday                              | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday                            | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|--------|
| 9        | Regular Monthly Review<br>(30 mins) |         |           |          | Overcoming Obstacles<br>(15 mins) |          |        |

“Whoa! This is the last week in the scheduled sessions. Although there is one further set of modules that you should do if you have an upcoming event on your calendar, these are the last two modules of the main programme.

With a second month behind us now, it’s already time for your **“Regular Monthly Review!”** The process mirrors what you did in week five. If you feel like you’re making gains, it’s likely you’ve been getting the work in. But if you’re not progressing, if you feel run down, look and see if there are any patterns. Are you sleeping enough? Are you committing to your workouts? Are you living on donuts and coffee?

Later in the week, after you’ve had time to process your review of your performance, we’re going to bolster the Positive Thinking habit with our final regular module: **“Overcoming Obstacles.”**

This is a visualization exercise, and is meant to be listened to whenever you’re feeling stuck—whether that’s due to an obstacle you can’t see a way around, an injury, a loss of motivation or any other reason that makes you doubt yourself. Even if you’re not in that situation right now, it’s a good idea to listen to the module so you know what it’s about and when to use it. It will help you re-focus, reset, and re-establish your confidence in who you are and where you’re headed.

We’ll ask you to find a quiet place where you can close your eyes and focus on the narration.”

- **Coach Neal Henderson**

| Week 9 Checklist   |      |
|--|------|
| Task   | Done |
| Listen to “Regular Monthly Review” and complete exercise.    |      |
| Listen to “Kicking Ass in Your Sleep Part 2” at least twice. |      |
| Listen to “Overcoming Obstacles.”                            |      |
| Listen to “Programme Wrap-Up.”                               |      |
| Listen to “Relaxing to Recover” again once this week.        |      |

**“It’s hard to beat a person who never gives up.”**

- **Babe Ruth**

# EVENT WEEK OVERVIEW

| Week/Day    | Monday                           | Tuesday | Wednesday   | Thursday | Friday | Saturday                                  | Sunday                          |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------|---|----------|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| Event Week* | Setting Event Goals<br>(20 mins) |         | Planning For Every<br>Event Scenario<br>(15 mins) |          |        | Event Day                                 |                                 |
|             |                                  |         |   |          |        | Preparing to Shred<br>Chamois<br>(9 mins) | How Did it Go?<br>(15 mins x 2) |

In addition to the nine-week programme of modules in The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme you've already completed, we've also included this series of four sessions for you to listen to the week of an important event where you want to perform to your best. That could be a race, a gran fondo, a big group ride with friends or simply an attempt at a PR on a Strava segment.

Whatever the event is, the first module you'll complete, **"Setting Event Goals,"** is designed to help you get clarity on exactly what you want to accomplish. How will you define success?

The second module, **"Planning for Every Event Scenario,"** is designed to prepare you for the inevitable hiccups that occur on event day so you're not distracted from your goals.

**"Preparing to Shred Chamois"** is designed to get you in the zone to deliver what athletes and sports psychologist call a peak performance. That's when everything comes together, when you are operating at the highest level almost without thought or effort. This is a breathing and visualization exercise, and is designed to be completed after your warm-up, right before you line up at your event. You'll need headphones and about 9 minutes away from the chaos of the venue to get the most out of the exercise.

Once you've unclipped and your heart rate has returned to somewhat normal levels it's time to listen to **"How Did It Go."** The first exercise in this module is designed to be completed about 15 minutes after the end of your event. You'll need your workbook with the event goals sheet you filled out earlier in the week, as well as something to write with. The second part of the exercise can be completed the day after the event, when you've had more time to reflect and process everything that happened.

As you head into your event week, know that you are prepared, powerful and capable of anything you set your mind to.

- Coach Neal Henderson

**"If you are going to win any battle, you have to do one thing: you have to make the mind run the body."**

- George S. Patton

# SETTING EVENT GOALS

This page is for  
Event Week's  
"Setting Event  
Goals" and "How  
Did it Go?"

|  |  |                       |  |
|--|--|-----------------------|--|
| Name of Event                                    |  | Date of Event:        |  |
| What does this Event mean to you?                |  |                       |  |
| How important is your performance in this Event? |  |                       |  |
| How prepared are you for this Event and why?     |  |                       |  |
| Goal One   |  | Goal Two              |  |
|  |  |                       |  |
| Post-Event Assessment                            |  | Post-Event Assessment |  |
|  |  |                       |  |
| The Story of My Event                            |  |                       |  |
|  |  |                       |  |
| Looking Forward                                  |  |                       |  |
| Key Learning                                     |  | How to Improve        |  |
|  |  |                       |  |

# PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST

This page is for  
Event Week's  
"Planning for Every  
Event Scenario."

| ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| ITEM                | PACKED |
| <i>e.g., Shoes</i>  |        |
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| PRE-EVENT PREPARATION            |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| THINGS TO DO                     | DONE |
| <i>e.g., check tire pressure</i> |      |
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# PRE-EVENT WHAT COULD GO WRONG

This page is for  
Event Week's  
"Planning for Every  
Event Scenario."

| WHAT COULD GO WRONG BEFORE EVENT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT |   |
|--|---|
| SITUATION  | RESPONSE  |
| <i>e.g., Forget a piece of equipment</i>                 | <i>e.g., Double check packing list right before leaving. Arrive to race early so if something is forgotten, can talk to other riders to find replacement.</i> |
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# EVENT STRATEGY

**This page is for  
Event Week's  
"Planning for Every  
Event Scenario."**

[illegible]

# WHAT COULD GO WRONG IN THE EVENT

This page is for  
Event Week's  
"Planning for Every  
Event Scenario."

| WHAT COULD GO WRONG IN EVENT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT |  |
|--|--|
| SITUATION  | RESPONSE   |
| <i>e.g., A breakaway gets away without me in it.</i> | <i>e.g., Find alliances in group to chase them down.</i> |
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# MENTAL TOUGHNESS PROGRAMME WRAP-UP

“Fantastic! I’d like to be the first to congratulate you on successfully completing The Sufferfest Mental Toughness Programme.

Over the past nine weeks (ten if you’ve done the Event Week), you’ve unlocked the power of your mind and improved your physical performance. You’ve embarked upon what I hope is a lifelong journey to further discover who you are, what you want, and what you’re capable of. You’ve successfully built the foundations of the four habits of the mentally tough and have the tools at hand to make them part of who you are.

As you know by now, Mental Toughness has proven, tangible benefits when it comes to improving athletic performance. That fact has been demonstrated by numerous studies and the personal experiences of countless athletes. But it also has tangible benefits to other facets of our lives, whether it’s career, relationships, or our overall outlook. The same qualities that make a successful athlete make a successful human being:

- The ability to set clear, measurable goals that are realistic but that take work to achieve.
- The commitment to do the work necessary to attain those goals, even when—especially when—it’s not easy.
- Regular reflection and self-assessment, knowing that every experience is an opportunity to learn, an opportunity to do better, an opportunity to grow.
- A strong focus and sense of self-awareness, with the ability to use that focus to create desired outcomes. An understanding that it’s the mind that controls the body, not the other way around.
- A positive mindset and affirming language creates positive outcomes for you and those around you.

Now — you’re not done. Without use, our muscles atrophy. The same is true of our mental toughness. The skills, techniques, and habits you’ve developed over the course of this Mental Toughness Programme need to be used to be effective. To reach the summit of your Mt. Sufferlandria, you need to continue with the daily, weekly, and monthly exercises you learned in the programme:

- Every **day** you should be performing your pre-workout focus routine and using the thought-redirection and positive self-talk principles to stay positive.
- Every **week** you should be establish a clear, concrete goal that is Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, and that is tied to a reward.
- Every **month** you should review your performance over the past four weeks, and establish a new monthly goal based upon the same SMART criteria.
- **Periodically** you should use the Relaxing to Recover exercise to reduce stress, and the Kicking Ass in your Sleep module to leverage the power of your subconscious to help create positive outcomes.
- And remember, **anytime** you need a refresher you can revisit any of the modules in the Mental Toughness Programme through The Sufferfest app.

As athletes, as people, we’re never truly finished. There are always new goals to strive for, new challenges to take on, a new Mount Sufferlandria to climb.

The techniques and skills you’ve learned during the course of this programme are your secret weapon. You have the tools. Again, congratulations.

Believe in yourself.

**Coach Neal Henderson**  
**Founder of APEX Coaching &**  
**Head Coach of The**  
**Sufferlandrian National Team**

