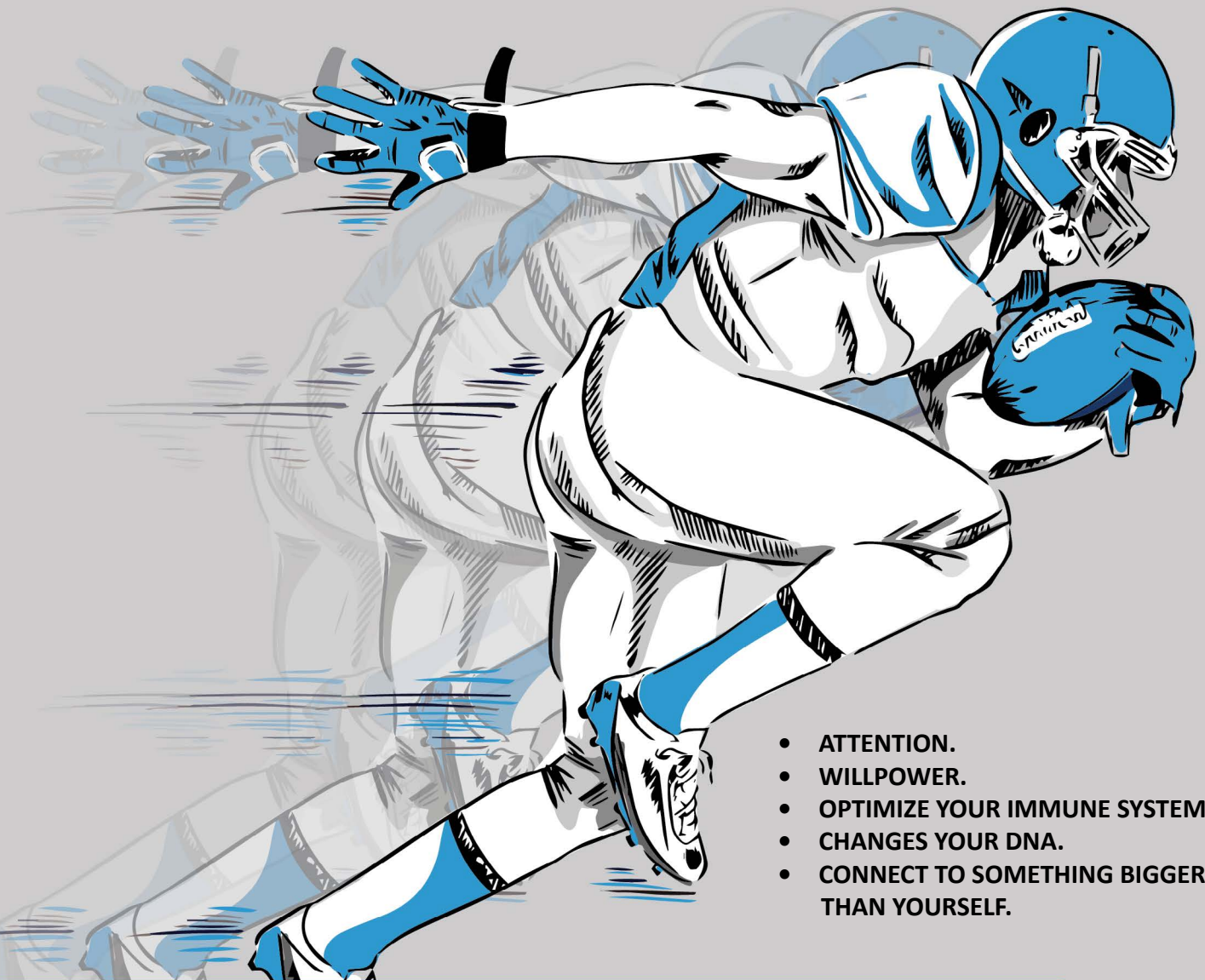


5 Reasons Why Meditation is Good For Athletes



- ATTENTION.
- WILLPOWER.
- OPTIMIZE YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.
- CHANGES YOUR DNA.
- CONNECT TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF.

The Secret to Peak Performance

Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Tom Brady and Derek Jeter are all athletes who meditate. I am a firm believer that if you want to get better at something, go to the best and look at what they do. Cut the fluff, look at what they do, copy and then take it up a notch. Here are the five reasons that meditation is essential for you to reach your potential as an athlete.



ATTENTION

- As an athlete, your ability to focus your attention where you want, when you want is a big factor in determining strength gains and elevating performance in competition.

How do you get stronger?

By lifting more weight that you have ever lifted before. When going for PR's (personal records) in the weight room your thoughts must be completely engaged in the task at hand. You need to be supplying yourself with the right self-talk to give yourself the belief that you can and will lift more than you have ever lifted before. Meditation helps you with this. Same thing in sprinting and getting faster. When trying to break a new speed record and your lungs feel like they are going to explode then you want to be putting your attention on technique and positive self-talk rather than how badly it hurts. The amount of PR's you have in your lifetime will be determined by your ability to put your attention where you want when you want.

Meditation elevates performance in competition.

As athletes you are familiar with the concepts of "Being in the Zone" getting into "Flow. The word Flow originated decades ago by positive psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly. This is how Csikszentmihaly defines Flow *"We have called this state the flow experience, because this is the term many of the people we interviewed had used in their descriptions of how it felt to be in top form: 'It was like floating,' 'I was carried on by the flow.'"* Being in Flow as an athlete is where you want to be, all distractions fade away and it is just you and your sport. But to get to that place where all distractions fade away then your brain have some experience in focusing attention. The more experience focusing attention the easier it will be to get into the Zone every time you compete. Your brain is not a muscle it's an organ. But like your muscles get physically stronger when you lift weights your brain gets physically better at holding attention when you meditate.



You can purchase the book Flow in the link [here](#).

A couple of other gold medals of wisdom from the book about the benefits of controlling your mind and attention, *"being in control of the mind means that literally anything that happens can be a source of joy."* And *"the mark of a person who is in control of consciousness is the ability to focus attention at will, to be oblivious to distractions, to concentrate as long as it takes to achieve a goal, and not longer. And the person who can do this usually enjoys the normal course of everyday life."*

According to Csikszentmihaly controlling your attention will help you in the weight room, make you faster, and have you competing at a higher level. PLUS It also guarantees that you will enjoy more of your day-to-day life as an athlete.

WILLPOWER

- Willpower is a mandatory skill you must cultivate to reach your athletic potential. I have done a couple of Star Summaries (Cliff Notes for athletes and coaches) on books written by North Carolina woman's soccer coaching legend Anson Dorrance and I love how he defines a champion, *"Anson was driving to work early one morning, and as he passed a deserted field, he noticed one of his players off in the distance doing extra training by herself. He kept driving, but he later left a note in her locker: 'The vision of a champion is someone who is bent over, drenched in sweat, at the point of exhaustion when no one else is watching.' The young woman, Mia Hamm, would go on to become one of the greatest players in the history of the sport."* You can purchase Dorrance's book Training Soccer Champions in the link [here](#). To be able to do a full workout before the rest of the World wakes up with no one watching requires a serious dose of willpower. Fortunately, willpower is something we can all develop.

The #1 way?

Meditation.

Good news: We can train our brains to get better at self-control. The #1 way to boost your willpower? Meditation.

Here is Stanford professor Dr. Kelly McGonagall from her great book the Willpower Instinct, *"There is growing scientific evidence that you can train your brain to get better at self-control. What does willpower training for your brain look like?"* In fact, *"Neuroscientists have discovered that when you ask the brain to meditate, it gets better not just at meditating, but at a wide range of self-control skills, including attention, focus, stress management, impulse control, and self-awareness. People who meditate regularly aren't just better at these things. Over time, their brains become finely tuned willpower machines. Regular meditators have more gray matter in the prefrontal cortex, as well as regions of the brain that support self-awareness"*

**DO SOMETHING
TODAY THAT
YOUR FUTURE
SELF WILL
THANK YOU FOR.**

I hear from athletes all the time that they dream to be great but they demonstrate a tough time with the everyday commitments that greatness requires. They want more willpower, self-discipline to build better habits. As I tell them your habits need to match your dreams. If they don't match then you need to build different habits or create different dreams.

Fortunately meditation is a cash-money way to boost your willpower and your habits. **It is a GAME-CHANGER!** Here's McGonagall again, *"One study found that just three hours of meditation practice led to improved attention and self-control. After eleven hours, researchers could see those changes in the*

brain. The new meditators had increased neural connections between regions of the brain important for staying focused, ignoring distractions, and controlling impulses. Another study found that eight weeks of daily meditation practice led to increased self-awareness in everyday life, as well as increased gray matter in corresponding areas of the brain. It may seem incredible that our brains can reshape themselves so quickly, but meditation increases blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, in much the same way that lifting weights increases blood flow to your muscles. The brain appears to adapt to exercise in the same way that muscles do, getting both bigger and faster in order to get better at what you ask of it."



Dr. Kelly McGonagall

Willpower is a skill, just like shooting a basketball or catching a football. Meditation is the #1 strategy you can do today to build this skill exponentially.



OPTIMIZE YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Meditation optimizes your immune system; the mind can heal the body. As an athlete the healthier you are, the more you can train. When you meditate your body escapes fight or flight and goes into the relaxation response. The less time you spend in fight or flight mode the less your immune system has to work. Herbert Benson is considered the pioneer of mind-body medicine. Here is Benson in his book *The Relaxation Response* “Amazingly, the very room and building in which my colleagues and I studied the T.M. devotees was where Walter B. Cannon, the famous Harvard physiologist, had discovered ‘the fight or-flight response’ sixty years before. For those of you unfamiliar with this finding, it was revolutionary. The fight-or-flight response offered glimpses into the evolutionary momentum that equipped modern human being with keen physiologic survival instincts. Cannon theorized that mammals have a physical ability to react to stress that evolved as a survival mechanism. When faced with stressful situations, our bodies release hormones—adrenaline and nor-adrenaline, or epinephrine and norepinephrine—to increase heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, metabolic rate and blood flow to the muscles, gearing our bodies either to do battle with an opponent or to flee. Our studies revealed that the opposite was also true. The body is also imbued with what I termed the Relaxation Response—an inducible, physiological state of quietude. Indeed, our progenitors handed down to us a second, equally essential survival mechanism—the ability to heal and rejuvenate our bodies. In modern times, the Relaxation Response is undoubtedly even more important to our survival, since anxiety and tension often inappropriately trigger the fight-or-flight response in us. Regular elicitation of the Relaxation Response can prevent, and compensate for, the damage incurred by frequent nervous reactions that pulse through our hearts and bodies.” You can purchase the Relaxation Response in the book [here](#).



Herbert Benson



Benson goes kind of Harvard PHD with the big words and lingo here but what he is saying is that while most people are familiar with fight or flight, they are unfamiliar with the counter to fight or flight, The relaxation response. The relaxation response helps your immune system just as much as fight or flight hurts.

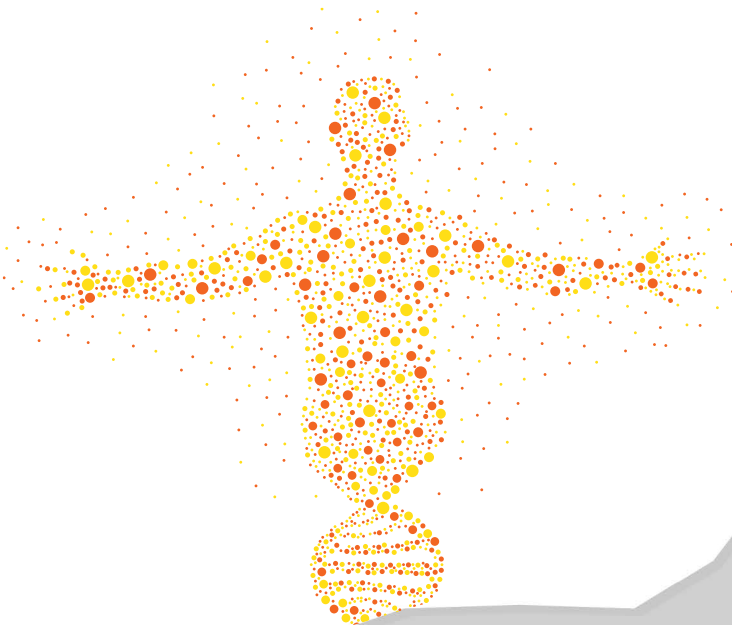
Spending more time in this relaxation response is especially important for athletes because the sports industry has an inordinate number of people who have come from rough backgrounds. These rough backgrounds have provided them with the drive and ambition to create a better life for themselves but these rough backgrounds also equate to a lot of time spent in fight or flight.

CHANGES YOUR DNA



4) Meditation literally changes your DNA. You have 54,000 genes in your body ([That is a statistic from Mr. Benson, thanks, Harvard PhD](#)). Scientists can map these out and see whether each gene is expressing itself positively/healthfully or negatively/unhealthfully. 2,200 of those genes become positively expressed with a consistent meditation practice. This is huge ! As the science of expertise industry has grown exponentially over the last fifteen years the debate of nature vs. nurture has pushed more and more toward nurture. The thought leader in the science of expertise industry is Anders Ericsson ([The 10,000 Rule Guy](#)). Here's Ericsson from his book Peak *"Why are some people so amazingly good at what they do?. Over my years of studying experts in various fields, I have found that they all develop their abilities ... through dedicated training that drives changes in the brain (and sometimes, depending on the ability, in the body) that make it possible for them to do things that they otherwise could not. Yes, in some cases genetic endowment makes a difference, particularly in areas where height or other physical factors are important. A man with genes for being five feet five will find it tough to become a professional basketball player, just as a six-foot woman will find it virtually impossible to succeed as an artistic gymnast at the international level. And, as we will discuss later in the book, there are other ways in which genes may influence one's achievements, particularly those genes that influence how likely a person is to practice diligently and correctly. But the clear message from decades of research is that no matter what role innate genetic endowment may play in the achievements of 'gifted' people, the main gift that these people have is the same one we all have—the adaptability of the human brain and body, which they have taken advantage of more than the rest of us."* You can purchase Peak in the link [here](#).

Most athletes know this more than the average person; they have seen how the brain and body can adapt by consistently pushing mental and physical limits. As an athlete, I know you are already a believer. By positively expressing 2,200 of your genes meditation is a tangible strategy athletes can take to positively adapt the brain and body. By optimizing your genes and training both the mind and the body you can become something much greater than the sum of your parts. You can become a whole new athlete. * In the book Peak Ericsson kills the 10,000 hour rule, writing that Malcolm Gladwell misinterpreted his research and that doing 10,000 hours of something does not automatically equate mastery.



CONNECT TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

- For thousands of years, warriors have executed meditation as a way to connect with something bigger, whether you call that something bigger your inner self, the divine, source, or the God of your choice. If you want to be a champion athlete then you want to build the habit of always looking for a way to connect yourself to something bigger.

Why is this important ?

Every champion sports team throughout history has played and won with a greater purpose than the individual self. The De La Salle Spartans are the greatest high school football program in American history. Included in their dominance was a 151 game winning streak from 1992 to 2004. Here's a quote from their legendary coach Bob Ladouceur *"I don't want them talking about me. I want them all talking to each other about what they need to do. Thursday night meetings often become very emotional—from kids tearfully promising to improve their play to making their teammates better able to discuss what problems they might be having at home or at school. Their performance means more to them because they realize they are connected to something bigger—that they aren't just playing for themselves, and that their execution affects everybody else."* You can purchase Ladouceur's book Chasing Perfection in the link [here](#).



Coach
Bob Ladouceur

In a more recent example here's Cleveland Cavaliers CEO Len Komoroski talking about the importance of the cavaliers winning the 2016 NBA championship.



Cleveland Cavaliers CEO
Len Komoroski

"It means everything. It is what drives us every day and is present in everything we do. It means more, though, because we understand the special and unique impact this has had on our community and over multiple generations of fans and families v across northeast Ohio and Cleveland. That is something we never take for granted. Winning the Championship and breaking the 52-year-old championship drought for our community is bigger than basketball and the team. It has impacted and changed the fabric of life here."

Too many athletes are satisfied going through the motions, doing the same thing that they did yesterday. Peak performers however, crave a deeper connection with their craft, their teammates, their goals, and their sport. Meditation helps you experience the difference between really feeling connected out there on the field and just existing.



This makes me think of a personal story from breakfast this morning. I was out to eat with one of my athletes and the waitress came by to take our order. I asked how she was doing and her reply was “New day, same sh*t.” I looked at her smiled and said “Not even close.” She smiled back at me, her day brightening a little bit even though it seemed that I was disagreeing with her. Truth is I DO agree with her. She is reliving each day as if it’s the same. Yet, when I go to the same restaurant and am waited on by her, each instance is totally new for me. Even if I order the same food, it’s still a new experience. I don’t bring the same old Coach Jackson to the table. I bring someone who is stronger, faster and more connected to who I want to be and where I want to go. Meditation helps me do that. In sport to achieve peak performance, you need to have a deep, personal energy

To Achieve Peak Performance

Think Ray Lewis walking out of his home field tunnel for the last time, Jordan in Game 6 in Utah, or Kobe dropping 60 in his last game. Yes, these legends have amazing skills that stand out, but it's their presence, their ability to connect with true emotion, their focus, their will, their energy, these are the things that truly stand out. The things Jordan does on the court, Lewis on the field or what a special operator does on a mission are all natural extensions of who they are and how well they are connected with their true self.



As athletes and coaches, we all want championships. A time where we can be with our teammates, coaches, brothers (or sisters) and experience a truly amazing moment in a lifetime of moments. This presence, this connection, this memory is a cumulative outcome of a season’s worth of focus, discipline, health, improvement and connection. Meditation helps with all these things.

Chase Jackson Peak Performance utilizes digital media to teach people all over the world how to train s like Star Athletes, Champion Teams and Special Operators.

- If you are an athlete wanting to physically and mentally train like the World's best reach out to me today.
- If you are a coach looking for champion training strategies to bring to your team reach out to me today.
- You learned why meditation is good for athletes in this PDF. If you want to learn how to execute a comprehensive mental training program reach out to me today.



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