

Subtlety of Fine Athletic Performance

By Dr. Derek Conte

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Whatever their sport may be, the finest athletes train very hard to reach personal-best performance levels. Everything possible must be considered and implemented in order to realize their goals. It is a steady developmental process borne of an unrelenting commitment.

Basic requirements of athletes pursuing excellence are God-given physical talent, desire, extreme discipline, consistency of effort, mental toughness, intelligence, coachability, and the ability to critique themselves accurately and objectively. Those are the starting points. On top of all this, proper eating of nutritious food and plenty of rest must be added to the mix.

Then there is the psychological aspect. Proper thinking... positive thinking must be practiced and achieved. Winning in sports is determined mostly by inches or fractions of a second, and the mind plays a big role in exciting the body into efforts to reach new heights. It is very common for athletes to employ sports psychologists personally or through their schools or professional teams to wring every ounce of performance from their bodies.

There is a process called “visualization” which is crucial to the elite athlete... actually “seeing” the victory in the mind’s eye BEFORE the victory is achieved. Have you ever watched a triple-jumper in a track and field event slowly, silently mark their steps as they talk themselves through what they must do later that day?

Then, there are biomechanical and neurological factors to be considered by the athlete in order to go beyond previous ‘personal bests’. Efficiency and proper function are essential for excellent performance. A nagging pain, an uneven gait favoring one side, a single bone out of place that goes unnoticed can easily prevent an athlete’s best expression of their talent from being realized.

Working with high school and college athletes of high rank has demonstrated to us that the simplest adjustment of a collarbone, shoulder, ankle, elbow, wrist or pelvis has led to a personal best from that athlete... even after only one, single adjustment. The key is to know what to adjust, and how. And as they continued with check-ups, their performances continued to improve.

Just as a competition is often decided by an inch or a fraction of a second, so too can an athlete be held back by having a joint displacement of a fraction of an inch. Often, it is not even noticed by the athlete. Have your athlete visit a chiropractor near you for an evaluation.

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