

Training the Most Important “Muscle” You Have... The Mind: Part 2

This article delivers the next three steps in program on how to take a look at the ceilings you may currently have created for yourself. We then discuss how to smash through them to another level in both your physical preparation and martial skill.

Remember:

Step 1 - Accept Responsibility for Your Actions

Step 2 - Adjust Your Current Standards

Step 3 - Become a Threshold Passer

"A problem can not be solved with the same consciousness that created it." ~ Albert Einstein

I propose that athletes move from lower to higher standards through what I call "threshold passing." By this I mean there is a certain perception or standard that an athlete has set for him or herself is their current threshold. The only way to overcome that threshold is to pass through it by first thinking at a different level of consciousness about it. So, if a fighter thinks that 225 on the squat is heavy, it is heavy. If they think that 315 is heavy, 225 now seems much lighter to that same athlete. The only way to ever get that athlete to eventually think that 315, and not 225, is heavy is to attempt weights gradually higher than 225 until he hits 315. In my training, I challenge my fighters to be threshold passing addicts. I want my athletes to always challenge the way that they think about the expectations they have for themselves. I believe that this is the only way to jumpstart progress. Simply put, if a fighter has a low expectation for him or herself, that is as far as they are going to go. By constantly setting that ceiling higher and higher, they can only move upward.

Step 4 - Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable

"If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment." ~ ***Marcus Aurelius***

Thresholds can be expressed in weights, like the 225 to 315 example, but a more difficult way to understand them is through perceived intensity. When I was in college, a classic test that we used in studies was the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) test. This test was a 0-20 scale (0 being easy and 20 being the most difficult) that an athlete rated themselves on dependent on how hard they thought an exercise or activity was at a given time during the test.. As I tested athletes for studies, I saw that people's perceptions were related to past experience with exercise and also training level. For example, a couch potato might think they were at 16 on the RPE scale while a runner might be at 3. Now granted, the physical shape of the two subjects would help to define the numbers as I stated, but even if that runner took years off, if they still had a higher standard for themselves through past experience, they would rate a lower number. Simply put, the RPE is about where you physically feel you are at, mentally how tough you are and the threshold you are prepared to tolerate as your ceiling. Understanding the RPE scale, what I am also constantly trying to do with my fighters is manipulate their perception of the scale. My training is designed to get them more comfortable where they were once uncomfortable. What once was an 18 for an athlete I want to become a 12 at the same intensity. As the athlete becomes more familiar with the pain and physiological changes at a certain physical level of exertion (not perceived level) his perception of how difficult it is gets reduced. I have seen this through our hurricane endurance sessions. By monitoring my own and the heart rates of our

athletes, I have found that even at the same high heart rate level, sessions seem "easier" for us now that we are used to experiencing them. So, by setting our standard so high during these sessions we have an expectation of how we should perform and pass through the necessary thresholds to get there. This demonstrates that sometimes changing how you think will get you to perform at a certain level and also that constantly performing at a certain level will change how you think. As you will see from Step 5, both perception manipulation and action are essential to take your game to the highest level.

Step 5: Now Do the Work

"Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I shall have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning." ~ **Mahatma Gandhi**

All of the above being said, even instantly changing perceptions doesn't mean your athlete is going to go in and double his or her previous weight on a lift. Everyone must remember that the physical changes must still eventually take place and that often takes more time than it takes to change your mind. The mind and the body can be seen like the yin and the yang in this case. There has to be a balance between the two. The mind and the body are completely interrelated. By changing your perception, you then give your body the opportunity to challenge itself at a higher level. At that point it is up to you to do the work. After this is done and adequate recovery occurs, the object is to then do it again. So, next time you go into the gym, I want you to accept responsibility for your current situation and start analyzing your current thresholds to see where your own perceptions may be holding you back. Once you find these, the goal is to create a new ceiling and rise above it. Now Get To Work!

I hope these five steps were helpful and the final one for a little is bonus to reach your goals is

WEIT

Take these five steps and do WEIT to reach your goals.
That's right do

“What Ever It Takes.”

****Remember to:**

- 1) Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
- 2) Obtain adequate amounts of protein
- 3) Work on your flexibility and
- 4) Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multivitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me architectsports@gmail.com

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