

HOW TO BOOST YOUR MENTAL TOUGHNESS

AND GET WHAT YOU WANT

Sheebes is a place for you—the runner, cyclist, triathlete—to find tips and resources to help you get what you want.

Whether it's staying healthy, running a faster 10k, maintaining a regular riding habit, or re-igniting your motivation, Sheebes is here to help.

I'm Michelle, a marathoner, cyclist, and occasional swimmer. I've created sheebes.com to share what I've learned about building mental muscle.

I'm not an expert nor a licensed sports psychologist and I don't have all the answers. But as I discover how to become mentally tougher, I share them on sheebes.com in hopes that it'll help you too.

Here we'll go through what mental toughness is and two simple ways you can boost your mental toughness right now.

SO WHAT IS MENTAL TOUGHNESS ANYWAY?

Mental toughness is the mental edge that helps you deal effectively with stress and pressure. And, this mental edge helps you remain determined, focused, and confident.

WHY MENTAL TOUGHNESS?

Your mind is a powerful and convincing beast. It can persuade you to stay inside and do nothing at all, or it can coax you out the door.

There's a caveat, though.

You can't think your way to fitness. While your mind is powerful, it's no substitute for physical training.

You can't be out of shape and think your way into running a marathon, finishing an Olympic distance triathlon, or riding a century. You've still got to put in the hard work.

The good news is, mental toughness can be trained, much like physical training.

Plus, when you develop mental toughness you'll...

- Do your workout even when you don't feel like it
- Feel calmer on race day
- Dig a little deeper and push a little harder
- Increase your odds of reaching your goals

FIRST, DECIDE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

Who do you want to be?¹ A runner? A healthy, fit person? A cyclist? Triathlete?

Deciding who you want to be is important because this determines what to do.

Research shows using noun-based wording, such as "I am", is tremendously effective. This wording twist²—"I am"—prompts people to match their actions to who they say they want to be.

For example, if you say “I am a runner”, you’ll do what runners do—go for a run.

Or if you say “I am a cyclist”, then you’ll go for a ride. (And buy all the gear. And also, $n+1$.)

When you’re feeling unmotivated, the question becomes: What would a runner do? A runner goes for a run even though they don’t feel like it.

The same goes for cyclists. And triathletes.

You may not believe yourself when you say “I’m a runner”, or “I’m a triathlete”, or “I’m a cyclist”, but you will soon.

That’s because every time you go for a run, ride, or swim, you’re proving to yourself that you’re a person who stays gritty, tough, and consistent.

Eventually, all this evidence adds up and gives you undeniable proof of your grittiness, toughness, and consistency. You become the person who is mentally tough.

Once you know who you want to become, you must develop those skills that’ll make you mentally strong.

THEN, USE THE ONE TOOL THAT WILL HELP YOU BECOME MENTALLY TOUGHER

Mental toughness requires a collection of skills—confidence, consistency, determination, and focus.

And there's one key tool that will help you gain mental strength—a training journal.

You may be familiar with a training journal and may even use one. But if you don't, it's where you'll enter your workouts, motivation levels, the weather, outside stressors, race day reviews, and more.

You are your greatest resource, so the more details you record, the more information you'll have at your fingertips to discover your personal patterns.

Plus, when you write it all down, you'll...

Cultivate a deep belief in yourself and your abilities. Your training journal will show the hard workouts you've completed. It's proof you've done challenging efforts before, and you can do it again.

Uncover the things that are and aren't working for you. For example, you might find a link between your thoughts during your activity—'*this is too painful*' and '*I can't do this*'—and cutting your workout short.

Then, in your next workout, you might opt to use positive self-talk to help you complete your entire session.

Increase your motivation.³ It's easy to lose sight of any progress in the day to day grind. But if you're consistently logging your sessions in a training journal, a quick glance will show the strides you've made toward your stated goal.

And making headway in your training is more than likely to boost your motivation and momentum.

A QUICK REVIEW

You've got to decide who you want to be. Whether you want to be a healthier person, a road cyclist, or a marathoner, this decision drives you to match your actions to who you say you want to be.

Then, keep showing up. Go swim. Ride. Run.

Keep a training journal to write your goals and record workouts. This essential tool reflects your work and helps you cultivate a deep belief in yourself, reveals your personal patterns, and boosts your motivation.

THE NEXT STEPS

Thank you so much for reading. And, if you want to learn specific tips for cyclists, runners, and triathletes, visit sheebes.com.

If you've received this from a friend, be sure to head over to sheebes.com and subscribe to the email list. You'll receive updates and private subscriber only information you won't want to miss.

Sources

1, 2. The 'Who do you want to be?' idea comes from the discussion of identity-based habits written in the book *Atomic Habits*, by James Clear (thank you for putting your excellent work into the world) and from the research study of *Motivating Voter Turnout by Invoking the Self*, by Christopher J. Bryan, Gregory M. Walton, Todd Rogers, and Carol S. Dweck.

3. Progress is motivational if you're doing meaningful work comes from *The Progress Principle* by Steven Kramer and Teresa Amabile