

Patience, planning, discipline and investing in yourself

By Allistair McCaw (Athletes' Conditioning)

Real success takes time, planning, effort, discipline, and patience. It also requires a real investment in yourself.

Spending hundreds of hours on the court, field or track is part of every athletes journey to the top, but any one at the top of their game will tell you that it wasn't just the time they spent improving their skills or athleticism, but more so the little investments they made in themselves along the way.

So besides 'putting in the time', how do you invest in your own performance? There are so many ways for example every time you read a book, you are investing in your own knowledge.

Rarely does reading a book pay off immediately, but every book you read opens your mind to new information, improves your ability to learn, improves your knowledge and will eventually pay remarkable dividends.

I have often read a book, put it down and thought nothing more of it, only to discover that several months or years later I have used something from that book to help me or remind me of pushing through tough times for example.

I was always fond and still am of reading self improvement or mindset books. I must admit that after reading probably over 100 books related to this subject they all start to sound the same. But if I can obtain one new thing from that book, I have gained more knowledge power. In fact that one small line or thing I read could help me when I might need it most. As a coach I'm always seeking new information to help my athlete or athletes I work with.

What about patience? I honestly believe being a former athlete and now coach, that patience is one of the most difficult and challenging aspects of being a professional athlete. We all want success and we want it now.

Every time you complete your workout, you won't see your body change or your performance make huge immediate improvements. In fact, you may not see any immediate changes. But when you consistently put the time and effort into your workouts, it can make profound improvements in your performance in the years to come. Strength, endurance, power, flexibility, speed all come a micro-improvement at a time.

What about dealing with injury? It's not the medicine, rehab or change in schedule that's the most difficult, it's the patience and time of letting the injury heal or repair.

Injury, unfortunately is part of any professional athletes' career.

I believe that the better an athlete mentally handles the tougher times, like having an injury for example, determines how quick and high they will bounce back. The key word here again is Patience.

What about nutrition? In my opinion the way you look now is a direct reflection of how you eat and take care of yourself. I also believe that a persons diet or rather "daily eating habits" shows how much discipline they have in themselves.

Besides having discipline, patience is once again the key here. When you make healthy choices in your diet, you won't wake up the next day and see the results. However, over time your energy will improve, your organs will function better, and ultimately you will move closer to your high-performance potential be in on the court or workplace.

Your next step is planning. Let me start by saying this: KEEP IT SIMPLE.
Start by writing down no more than 2 simple goals you would like to achieve in these 3 performance areas:

1. Mindset (self improvement like self talk or reading)
Example: I aim to read one book or autobiography per month related to self improvement.
2. Nutrition (Daily eating habits)
Example: I aim to cut down on sugary foods and aim to drink at least 8 glasses of water per day.
3. Movement (exercise)
Example: I aim to step up my quality in my fitness training and do more stretching.

When you take the few moments to plan and start practicing the performance area's we have discussed, such as improving your self-talk or improving your eating habits, you probably won't see an immediate improvement in your performance. But when these tools are used consistently over time, you not only become better at them, but the dividends they pay significantly increases. Slowly your confidence grows, your focus improves, and your mindset becomes a high stronger, more disciplined.

So for a bigger and better payback in the future, start making some small daily investments in yourself today and have a little patience!