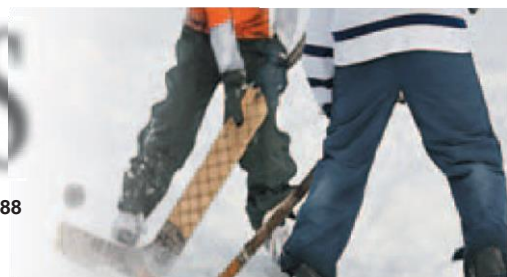


SPORTS

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Finding balance in the summer months



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Training Matters



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Maintaining a balance between your sport life and the rest of your life is always important. You must be able to give the proper attention where it is due, whether that be to family, friends, school, training and competing, a job, or something else. However, maintaining this balance becomes even more difficult and important as the summer months approach.

Whether you are in the off-season, ramping up your competitive season or playing a second sport, summer brings new challenges not often faced throughout the rest of the year. Now, in addition to finding balance with all the other previously listed areas of your life, you are faced with beautiful weather and the desire to be outside enjoying the new season that is right around the corner.

Ah yes! Summer; the days filled with sunshine, sprinklers, playing outside, exploring, traveling, and... "what?! you have to be at practice?" This might be a phrase that you start hearing when the people you want to spend time with are off enjoying the warm weather and you have to be at a practice, a training session, or a game.

First things first, let's remember that you don't have to be there. You want to be there. This is your passion, and you are working towards your goals. So although you may feel as though your sport is taking away from your extracurricular activities, in the end, you made the decision to pursue these dreams. Now, you must learn to manage your time, attention and motivation so that you can enjoy the best of both worlds. This happens by utilizing all of your mental skills to keep your head in a good space.

As this summer approaches, reflect on your goals. Where do you want to be by the end of the summer? Will you have tryouts that you need to be in peak condition for? Will you be competing throughout the summer and need to keep regular practices a priority? Whatever it is, go back and review what your goal is, and why it is your goal. In reviewing your goal, make any adjustments that you need to make it the most applicable it can be to your current situation.

Next, you must plan! This is why knowing what you want is so important. As long as you know what you want, you'll be able to figure out how to get there, and what needs to be done. If you know you need to train 15 hours a week, plan out what your training days will be, and what you'll do at each session. This allows you to feel more flexibility in your schedule.

If you know you have to train for two hours on a Tuesday, but there is an event that you'd really like to attend that night when you'd normally be training, you can make the adjustments to still get your training in and attend the event. You may be able to switch to a morning session, or bump your evening session to the afternoon. If you plan for it, you can usually make it happen.

"But Courtney, so many of my plans are last minute!" Well, this is where we may need to bring back some strong self-talk to keep us on track.

No matter who you are, what sport you play or what level you're competing at, there will always be some distraction that wants to pull you away from what you had planned. Sometimes it is injury, sometimes it is scheduling errors, and sometimes it is a bike ride to Swirls. In taking responsibility for your training and your success, you need to ask yourself what is most important in that moment. You may need to say to yourself, "there will be other times for ice cream, my time to strive for gold is now." Be strong, reflect on your goals and you will persevere.

Finally, listen to your body. It knows what it needs and wants in order to be successful. If you've trained hard and it is slowing down, give yourself the permission to take a break. This doesn't mean throwing all your hard work out the window, it may mean opting for a less strenuous workout, cutting down training time, or taking a recover approach to the days' training. When you've taken all the right steps, it makes it easier to comprehend the important of both intensity and recovery.

