



Building resilience to athletes from Indian Special forces

Mohamed Prince M

Department of Physical Education, Sree Shankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala, India

Abstract

Performing under pressure or dealing with setbacks, you are on the right lines. Essentially, it is using personal qualities in order to withstand 'pressure' 'Robust' resilience is probably what most of people are thinking of; holding off an opponent by not letting negative thoughts, emotions or events affect performance. Not too dissimilar is 'rebound' resilience, which is the term given to an ability to bounce back from a setback an athlete getting injured right before an Olympics who goes on to win gold at the following Olympics four years later. Simply, those who lack resilience are likely to crumble under pressure and suffer a subsequent rapid deterioration in performance. Conversely, high levels of resilience will protect an individual from the negative effects of pressure, helping to facilitate optimum Performance. A theatre of war is very different to a competitive sporting arena, but there are more similarities than you realise. Both usually involve a battle between opposing teams or individuals; both can have disastrous consequences should one lose this battle; and both require individuals to overcome numerous challenges and set-backs along the way. For this reason, it would appear that the resilience training received by soldiers could also be utilised by athletes and teams. It seems then, that sport can learn plenty about resilience from the military. Military-style training camps are one way sports teams are beginning to improve a number of attributes in order to achieve success. Resilience, teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, and decision making all important attributes that the military teach that sport stars undoubtedly need. Think about it, how many times have you seen a football team race into a 2-0 lead in the first-half, only to lose the game 3-2? A resilient team would be likely to make correct decisions under pressure and see the game out to win. The Indian defence forces both three Army, Navy, Air force, have elite commandos respectively PARA SF, MARCOSE, GARUD COMMANDOS Are able to provide Resilience training. Because Getting selected to be trained as a MARCO it is difficult. And it gets worse. A five-week-long 'hell's week' follows this, which includes sleep deprivation and intense physical training. Those that make it through, or don't quit on their own, actually proceed to the actual training. The Few the Fearless.

Keywords: Para sf, marcos, garud commandos

1. Introduction

Defining resiliency is relatively easy. Simply stated, it is the ability to bounce back positively after a mistake, mishap, loss or any negative situation. Defining the skills and behaviours of resilient people however is not as simple, as there are a range of skills involved. What is critical to realize, is that resiliency is not a personality trait or behavioural style. Resiliency is a skill anyone can learn. The philosophy we believe in at Athlete Assessments, is that technical and physical ability is a starting point only to being an effective performer. To truly maximize these abilities, athletes (and others) need to develop the non-technical or non-physical aspect of their sporting behaviours and this is where developing a mind-set of resiliency comes in. often hear the term resilient in reference to sports, but first, let's define resiliency in general terms. The American Psychological Association defines resilience as:- "The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress - such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences". Athletes of all abilities, but especially high-performance athletes, must have resiliency in abundance in order to war with the dynamics of internal and external conflict. As Dr. Robert Heller, a psychologist and sports psychology consultant, attests, resiliency in sports is one of the key mental attributes an

individual or team player must have. The ability to come back from behind, to fight fiercely until the last second. As psychologists, coaches, and trainers seek to understand and to train their athletes in the art of resiliency, In essence, the resiliency theory is based on the principle that all people have the ability to overcome adversity and to succeed despite their life circumstances. The resiliency theory focuses on providing developmental support and opportunities to promote success, despite the mistakes or errors an individual makes. The Resilience Building aims to support athletes and coaching personnel in the professional sporting arena to enhance their ability to perform their best under pressure. This mental resilience work is focused on a preventative and treatment level and has the added bonus of improving the well-being and lives of those involved in sports. Our approach features educational training and skills development, draws upon evidence-based and holistic approaches and supports the use of research to enhance the performance and health of the sports population. The training can be done in individual and group format.

2. Resilience training in sport

A theatre of war is very different to a competitive sporting arena, but there are more similarities than you realise. Both usually involve a battle between opposing teams or individuals; both can

have disastrous consequences should one lose this battle; and both require individuals to overcome numerous challenges and set-backs along the way. For this reason, it would appear that the resilience training received by soldiers could also be utilised by athletes and teams.

Think about it, how many times have you seen a football team race into a 2-0 lead in the first-half, only to lose the game 3-2? At 2-0, a team is comfortable. If the opposition score (2-1), there is an increased pressure to hold on to the lead, resulting in a necessity to withstand this pressure. A resilient team would be likely to make correct decisions under pressure and see the game out to win. However, teams lacking in resilience are likely to experience catastrophic thinking; deep thoughts about worst-case scenarios (e.g. “we are doomed to lose because...”). IRT is used to minimize catastrophic thinking in soldiers, thus the techniques used by the military would seem appropriate to develop resilience in athletes and help them prepare for pressurised situations.

“Icebergs”, or deeply held beliefs⁸, are discussed during IRT and should be addressed in athletes. According to CSF, a belief should be questioned in the following way: is it meaningful; is it accurate in this situation; is it able to be changed; is it useful? Following this, icebergs can be appraised and assessed, with a decision made on whether they are facilitative to performance or not. There are infinite times this process could be used in sport; “striving to be the best player on the pitch” may be incredibly meaningful but may not be useful, particularly in team sports where cohesion and selflessness are two attributes necessary for optimal performance. Whilst these deeply held beliefs can be incredibly resistant to change, an athlete must at least recognise them if they are to develop psychological resilience.

2.1 Mental resilience & sports performance

Clarity of mind is vital for allowing you to stay calm and achieve pinpoint focus so you can perform your best under pressure. Facing an important competition, you can expect to feel some pressure and stress. This is normal. You probably already know that a certain amount of threat arousal will actually increase your focus, concentration, increase your strength and stamina, speed up your reaction time and ultimately enhance your sports performance. This is what’s known as your zone of optimal performance. But say you underperformed and didn’t win last time and preparing for your next competition, your mind is filled with self-doubt and self-criticism triggering powerful distressing feelings such as anxiety or frustration. Naturally, you then struggle to think clearly or start to over-think your moves rather than allow your body to lead the way. You can’t get into your flow and you end up choking and performing badly. To make matters worse, you’re then filled with self-criticism after the competition and may end up feeling bad, frustrated, deflated, or a failure. You can’t stop going over and over in your mind how you performed, the mistake you made, or trying to figure out why. Your confidence takes a massive hit and then worry about performing badly again starts to creep in. When feeling the pressure, your ability to respond to negative thoughts and feelings, achieve clarity of mind, and stay focused is key to supporting you to realise your sporting potential.

The concept behind mental resilience training (MRT) and how the training package was developed and implemented within the British Army Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catt Erick between 2014 and 2016. MRT is a mindfulness-based psychological skills

training package that integrates cognitive behavioural and mindfulness based principles and techniques, which have been proven to improve stress regulation, emotional and cognitive control and self-confidence in military personnel. MRT is based on an extensive evidence base that has demonstrated that psychological skills training delivers tangible improvements in performance in elite sport and in healthcare, business and military contexts. The initial trials at the ITC Catt Erick have delivered tangible improvements in infantry recruits’ use of psychological skills within real-life training contexts.

2.3 The resiliency theory in action

Being in top physical fitness alone is not enough for sustained success in professional sports. Over recent years, there has been increasing awareness of the vital importance of mental resilience in enhancing peak performance in elite athletes. Your ability to hold it together mentally when under pressure is essential for making you a winner in the sport you love.

Furthermore, research shows that professional sports athletes suffer from stress-related conditions more than the rest of the population (Fullerton, 2002, Mann, 2007). This can be due to the amount they are required to balance – the demands of the sport, celebrity status, and media attention, pressures of sponsorships, family and everyday life. For example, a recent study by FIF Pro (2013) found that one in four professional footballers suffer symptoms of anxiety and depression. The mental health of recently retired professional footballers was even more concerning, with one in three reporting signs of anxiety and depression. Retirement is also a critical period that can put many professional sport athletes under a lot of stress. Retiring from the sport you’ve been devoted to can mean multiple losses and adjustment to finding a new life.

The good news is that you can learn how to perform your very best under pressure by strengthening your mental resilience. Developing your emotional intelligence skills is a crucial part of the process. The first step is for you to understand how your emotions, mind and brain work. This lays a firm foundation upon which to learn skills to use your emotions and mind to achieve your sporting goals. To get the mental advantage over your competitors, you need to be able to calm yourself down quickly and retain sharp focus when things don’t go your way. To be the best in your sport, you also need to know about the costly mistakes that will seriously undermine your ability to be mentally strong under pressure. At Resilience in Mind centre, we can teach you how to avoid the mistakes that can interfere with a winning performance.

2.3 Benefits

- Get the mental advantage over your competitors
- Maximise your ability to perform your best under pressure to win
- Increase your ability to stay calm under pressure
- Increase your clarity of mind
- Increase your attentional control, focus, & concentration skills
- Combat worry, self-criticism, self-doubt
- Boost your inner strength and confidence
- Know your signs and symptoms of stress
- Reduce stress about performance, injury, contracts and life outside the sport you love

- Strengthen your courage to win
- Change limiting beliefs and behaviours
- Bounce back quickly after disappointment
- Live a contented life
- Maximise your enjoyment in and outside the sport you love.
- Cope better with retirement

3. Conclusions

Mental skills are important for enhancing performance, this is clear. What is not clear is what the best delivery method is. Both objective studies and subjective programs have their strengths and weaknesses, but the objective methods provide valid and reliable results from which one can be more comfortable in developing a comprehensive mental skills training program. As coaches, we need to be active in keeping up to date with the research. As athletes, we need to be open to new and innovative ways of gaining another competitive edge over an opponent. In the end, the advancement of our understanding surrounding mental skills and performance is only limited by our fear and/or unwillingness to try new things.

Resilience encourages optimal performance and allows for efficient use of both physical and emotional skills. Military personnel with higher resiliency have been shown to be able to recover more quickly from difficult situations both in combat and in their personal lives. Thus, preventative efforts like MRT and mindfulness training are beginning to be considered essential to the mental and physical health of sports personal.

Indian defence elite force are proved the world after the surgical strike they are best. They are able to provide resilience training for the elite athletes

Developing resilience in the army is not too dissimilar to developing it in athletes and teams. Whilst the environment it is developed in is entirely different, the methods and techniques used are almost identical. The lessons, mind-set, personal qualities and psychological characteristics taught in the military have the potential to help athletes and teams acquire the necessary resilience required to perform at the highest level.

4. References

1. <https://www.army.mil>
2. <https://athleteassessments.com>
3. <https://www.army.mod.uk>
4. <https://www.deminos.co.uk/resilience-england/>
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/jul/10/psychology-england-football-team-change-your-life-pippa-grange>