

Stress management for coaches

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FROM SMALL TO GREAT
IC4 – INSTITUTE FOR MEDICINE AND SPORTS, SLOVENIA

TAKE CARE OF YOUR
coach

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Occupation: Sports Coach, Instructor, Gymnast Coach

The Occupational Information Network (O*Net)
(<https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-2022.00>)

- most coaches have not managed to develop life transferable skills that could help them to reduce stress from their occupational demands.
- Most of them do not even have a plan for what to do after their coaching career is over. For example, if their career ends abruptly, if contracts are terminated or not renewed, coaches are usually left on their own.
- Sport can not exist without a dedicated coach.
- Coaches are expected to manage many psychological skills - emotional regulation, behaviour control, communication, etc.
- They are expected to act like psychologists, mentors, strength and performance coaches, nutritionists, chauffeurs, race admins, etc

Who is the coach (what is the holistic approach to coaching)?

Coach is a key person in shaping an athlete's career.

The tasks a coach should perform are:

- Planning,
- Training - all types of training, fitness, technical and tactical,
- Performance Control,
- Versatile care for the athlete,
- Counseling and assistance regarding schooling, relationships with friends, teammates and also partners, parents,
- Role in the competition.

Stress Management Strategies (SMS)

- take breaks
- keep a realistic schedule
- delegating tasks - **it is a skill**
- take time for yourself, **to stay fit and in shape**
- use relaxation techniques, **breathing and mindfulness**
- spend time with loved ones
- maintain your hobbies
- when you feel necessary, visit a consultant
- stay positive
- get to know your team personally

Stress management can be tackled through learning mindfulness techniques

CHOOSE ONE:

EXERCISE 1: BREATHING OBSERVATION

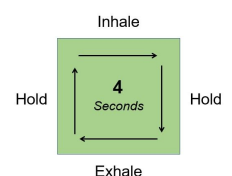
EXERCISE 2: LISTENING TO SOUNDS

EXERCISE 3: MINDFUL EATING

1. Square (or box) Breathing

is a skill which can help refocus your mind and calm down your body. This breathing technique can be used when you are stressed and need a moment of calm, or as an extended meditation when you have more time.

1. Find a comfortable position.
2. Slowly inhale for four seconds.
3. Hold your breath for four seconds.
4. Slowly exhale for four seconds.
5. Hold your breath for four seconds.
6. Repeat this cycle four times.



2. Mindfull Listening

- Listen carefully to the sounds around you.
- Focus on them, listen carefully to what these sounds are, without thinking about anything in particular.
- When you hear a sound, raise your hand, when it stops, lower your hands. Do the exercise for 1 to 3 minutes, then think about how many different sounds you have detected.

How do we learn new skills?

Galanti (2020) says that with practice, like athletes - stick to a certain program to get in shape. For a moment, imagine that mindfulness or any other new skill is like a muscle. Will you be in shape by doing one squat? Of course not. The approach to mindfulness written below will help you deal with obstacles and excuses along the way.

CONCLUSION

In this short presentation, we tried to present a realistic view of the coaching profession and it's stressors.

We suggested some exercises.

Our goal is to remind coaches there are practical and simple techniques that reduce the effects of stressors.

As coaches learn to manage their own stress instead of burning out, they will be more motivated to work, more satisfied, and will find pleasure in their work again. We also assume that a satisfied and positive coach also works on the team, which consequently trains better and achieves greater success.

3. Mindfull Eating

- You need raisin, a popcorn, a nut, or a medium-sized candy.
- Focus on that object, observe it closely, as if you have never seen it before.
- Take one object in your hands, between your fingers and feel what it feels like, what color it is. Are there any thoughts associated with this subject? Maybe how much you like the taste of this item or that you don't really like it.
- Smell it, what is the smell?
- Put the object to your mouth with all your attention, paying attention to your palm carrying it to your mouth. What is it like when the mouth is expecting food? How does it feel when this food is in your mouth and what is it like when you chew it slowly and gently? What does it taste like?
- Observe your thoughts that arise when you swallow and then observe how it feels when you swallow this bite.
- You can also repeat the exercise with another tasty bite.

How do we learn new skills?

- Schedule: How many times a week will you exercise? When?
- Try it for at least a week, remember, doing one repetition once is not enough to learn.
- Exercise every day, be consistent. Start simple and short, do it even in a bad mood (and if you forget, it's okay too, you just shouldn't give up).
- Mark each time you do a daily exercise, tagging is an incentive.

Be open to new experiences and observe what mindfulness practice is, stay curious as you try new skills.

Where can you find more

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