

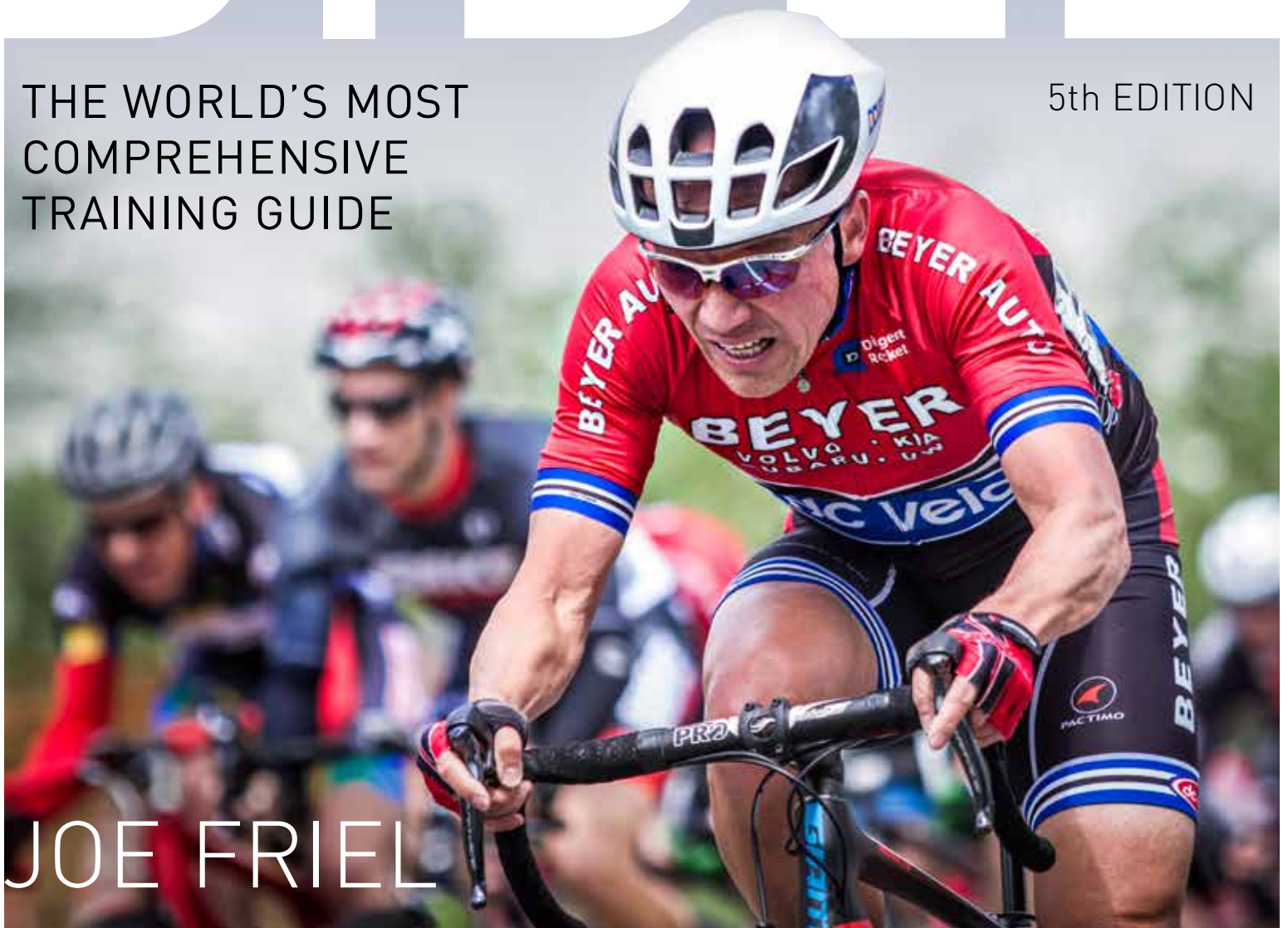
ALL NEW

THE CYCLIST'S

TRAINING BIBLE

THE WORLD'S MOST
COMPREHENSIVE
TRAINING GUIDE

5th EDITION



JOE FRIEL

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MIND AND BODY

You are fully capable of racing at a higher level. You may not believe that yet, but I have no doubts about it. Every athlete I've ever coached could improve. And whether you know it or not, your performance is certainly being held back by your mind, the most common impediment to high performance. It's highly likely that you are also constrained physically—you haven't reached your body's full potential.

Not knowing how to train effectively for competition is quite common. If your mind is not focused and ready for more, you won't achieve more. Being uncertain about the best methods for physical training is also a widespread problem. That's why we're here. I am confident that if you read this book and apply its program to your training, you will become a faster, smarter, more capable, and more accomplished competitor.

In Part I, therefore, we examine the two critical components of high-performance racing—mind and body—starting in Chapter 1 with what needs to happen in your mind. You may be thinking that physical training should be your sole focus as you try to improve, but I want to show you several contributors to what in sport is commonly called “mental toughness.” As an athlete, you already have some measure of this skill. It only needs to be further developed. As we examine the concept, new ways of thinking about yourself as an athlete will emerge. That is the basis of mental toughness.

Chapter 2 starts the discussion of how to prepare your body for high-performance racing, beginning with the mental perspective and then progressing to the philosophy and methodology of training I use with the athletes I coach. I've seen this work for so many athletes over the years that I feel certain your performance will also improve by adopting it. The chapters that follow will continue to expand on this topic.

By the end of Part I, you will be ready to move on to the finer points of physical training that hold the potential for helping you become a high-performance cyclist.

MENTAL PERFORMANCE

THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT high-performance cycling. We bike racers usually think of high performance in terms of training and race results—how physically fit we are and how many podiums we’ve been on. But there’s more to it than that. High performance also has a mental component. High performance is as much a way of thinking and behaving—an attitude—as it is a race result. Get the attitude right, and the physical part, as well as the race results, take care of themselves.

If your mental attitude lags behind your physical performance, you will never reach your full potential. In fact, if anything is holding you back right now as you work to become a winning cyclist, it’s probably the mental part of high performance. How can this be? Quite simply, if you have any doubt in your mind about your ability to accomplish anything—if you doubt you can win a race—you probably will fail, no matter how many hours of training you’ve put in. To win, you need to develop and maintain a winning attitude.

At the core of your attitude about cycling are the hundreds of thoughts and small decisions that define who you are every day. These have at least as great an impact on your race performance as your on-the-bike training.

What are these thoughts and small decisions? Here are a few examples of internal questions that you ask and resolve daily with little or no deliberation: How will I use my time today? What race am I training for? How do I think I’ll do in it? Will I work out today? What workout will I do? Will I push my limits or go easy? When will I work out? What will I eat and drink? What do I think about? Will I read or watch TV? Who will I hang out with? Who will I ride with? How do I think about myself? What’s my self-talk like? Am I a strong rider? What do others think about me? How do I talk to others? What’s most important to me? When will I go to bed? How and when will I wake up?

These performance-defining questions are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many, many

Every day, the seemingly small decisions you make impact what your athletic performance will be.

True high-performance athletes are not only physically fit, they're also mentally fit.

more. The overarching question that must precede every one of them, though, is this: Are you making decisions that promote high performance or not? Is your mind in line with your ambitions for the sport?

Every day, the seemingly small and insignificant decisions you make impact who you are and what your athletic performance will be. Individually, these decisions can seem insignificant, leaving no lasting impression and having little effect on your performance. But as similar decisions accumulate over days, weeks, months, and years, they ultimately determine who you become and how you perform as a cyclist—and in every other aspect of your life. As determiners of performance, all of these small decisions and thoughts go well beyond how hard your ride was today.

True high-performance athletes are not only physically fit, they're also mentally fit. They're not perfect, but when it comes to the things that impact performance, they are likely to take advantage of nearly every thought and decision to create opportunities for success. Their daily lives are about high performance. In fact, they are obsessed with success.

Is that good or bad? The answer depends on a lot of variables. But I can tell you that you will never achieve the highest levels of performance without some degree of obsession. The top athletes in the world are highly committed to their goals. That's a requirement for achieving success at anything in life that's difficult to attain.

In this chapter, I touch on only a few mental opportunities for success that will help you perform at a higher level. But the topic of mental fitness is much deeper than I can cover here, so once you have mastered the techniques in this chapter and throughout this book, I encourage

you to become a student of the mental side of high performance by reading other books on the subject and talking with successful people from all walks of life. If you embrace daily improvement in your mental approach to cycling, your training and racing will benefit greatly.

MOTIVATION

High performance is rooted in motivation. Competitive cycling demands an inner drive to excel in order to cope with the mental and physical stresses of training and racing. Motivation starts with a commitment to your goal. It also requires a lifestyle that aligns with the demands of your goal. The higher your goal, the more your daily actions must contribute to achieving that goal. At the highest level, *everything* in your life—from food to friends and beyond—must be focused on the goal.

Everything you must do to achieve high performance leads back to motivation. It's what gets you out of bed early to fit a workout into your day. It's what causes you to make healthy food choices instead of eating sugary junk foods. It's what keeps you going when a workout is so hard it hurts. It's what leads you, after an exhausting three-hour training ride, to spend another 20 minutes analyzing your session training data.

Motivation is also at the heart of setting a high goal. The extraordinary motivation to commit to the demands of focused training and a high-performance lifestyle must be intrinsic. There's nothing I can say to motivate you. I can only offer suggestions and perspective. Your level of motivation is entirely of your own making. You're motivated to excel because you love the sport. There's little else in the world that turns you on

so much. You love how you feel after a race or hard workout. You read about cycling, watch it on TV, hang out with other riders, talk about the sport with friends, and think about it throughout the day. You define yourself as a cyclist. You have an unshakable love for the sport. And so you have a strong desire to push your limits and see how far you can go as a competitive cyclist.

Motivation like this ultimately comes only from within, but being around other motivated riders can also be contagious. This is where your team can contribute a lot to your desire to excel at the sport. Once you master the motivation and knowledge necessary for a high level of success as a cyclist, your rise through the ranks of the sport will be astounding. So while I can't provide you with motivation, I can tell you how to use it to set achievable goals and perform at a higher level. That's where we are headed next on this journey to high performance.

DREAMS, GOALS, AND MISSIONS

High performance always starts with a dream. This is something I've learned from consulting with and coaching athletes who were professionals, represented their countries at the Olympic Games, won national championships, and broke national and course records. The dream was in their minds for a long time before it ever became a goal. All of these athletes came from what otherwise would be considered normal backgrounds, and prior to their dream they never saw themselves as capable of achieving such remarkable accomplishments. They simply had a dream. It persisted and wouldn't go away. At some point, they made the decision to go for it—to make their

dream a goal. They took the first step, which led to many more steps.

Making their dreams into goals meant making changes. This is the hard part and requires some deep thinking. Dreamers must ask themselves, Am I willing to take the first steps toward the goal? What should I change about my life to improve the possibility of success? Can I commit to the changes? How great will the sacrifices be? Am I willing to make them for this goal? What if I fail? What if I succeed?

Excellence is rare. Too many athletes have only wishes—vague stuff they'd like to see happen but that they never truly define as or, much less, pursue as a goal. If you have a lingering dream and gradually give it shape and substance over time, you will eventually come up with that goal. What must come next is the will to pursue the goal—a mission. This requires a change in mindset. There is a purposeful attitude about a person on a mission. Such an athlete will find a way to make a goal happen, regardless of the inevitable obstacles and setbacks.

To help you get started down this path to cycling excellence, there are several questions I'd like for you to consider about your dreams and goals for the sport. Read Sidebar 1.1, "Dreams and Goals," and answer the questions there. There's no need to write down your answers. Just think your way through them while being frank and honest.

After reading the sidebar, did you learn anything new about your dreams, goals, and attitude? You may not have—yet. Sometimes a dream has to percolate for a long time before you decide to take action. But the sooner you do, the better.

Never stop dreaming. For the remainder of this book, I'd like you to keep your dream uppermost in your mind. What would you most

High performance always starts with a dream.

SIDEBAR 1.1 Dreams and Goals

To create a framework for taking action on your goals, answer the following questions as frankly and honestly as you can:

- Why do you race?
- Why not do something else instead?
- Do you have other important hobbies or activities in your life besides cycling?
- What would you most like to achieve in the sport this season?
- What is the most important thing you must accomplish to achieve that goal?
- What stands between you and success this season?
- How confident are you that you can achieve your goal?
- What was your biggest goal last season? Did you achieve it?
- What obstacles did you overcome to achieve last year's goal? Or, why did you not achieve it?
- If you don't achieve your goal this season, will you try again?
- Were there other people who supported your goal last year? If so, who were they?
- Do you commonly start workouts and races too fast and then fade?
- How often do you miss workouts, and for what reasons?
- Do you prefer to train with others or alone?
- How often do you train with other athletes?
- How supportive of your cycling goals are your family and friends?

like to accomplish as a cyclist? Eventually you will take your dream to the next level by setting a goal (we'll get into the details of goal setting in Chapter 5). For now, your dream may be far off in the future. That's OK. The bigger the dream and the higher the goal, the longer it takes to realize. Once you commit and have a goal, it must become your mission. The more challenging the mission, the more you must focus your life around it. It must be your purpose every day in every decision you make.

Believe to Achieve

There are bound to be setbacks in your race preparation, but they must be taken only as minor

roadblocks on the path to success. All successful athletes at every level experience setbacks. When they occur, you must remain confident, be patient, and continue to be mentally tough. Anything less leads to failure.

The key to commitment when setbacks occur is self-confidence. You won't achieve your goal if you don't believe you can. You must believe to achieve. Can you do it? Do you really believe in yourself? Are you confident even when things aren't going well? Self-confidence is that wispy, soft-spoken voice in the back of your head that says, "I can do this." Unfortunately, that positive voice isn't always there when you need it. You're more likely to hear a negative voice in

your head, one that always speaks to you as an angry authoritarian, saying loudly, “You *can’t* do it!” You’ll hear that stern voice often as you prepare for your races, especially on race day, when everything is on the line. You need confidence at these times to remain focused and determined.

You were born to be confident. As a child you did lots of risky things because you were sure you could do them. Why would you think otherwise? In fact, risk was fun. Unfortunately, along the road of life most people lose their self-confidence. Early failures magnified by especially negative people drain it out of them. The good news is that you can overcome this. Here are two easy things I’ve often had athletes do when they needed to build confidence. You must do these daily, without exception. Every day.

Saving successes. To promote self-confidence, open a savings account of successes. It’s easy. Every night when you go to bed, after you’ve turned out the lights, you experience the only time in the day when there are no external interruptions. Take advantage of this to run a quick check of how training went that day. Review your workouts. Find one thing you did well. It may not seem like a big deal. Maybe you climbed one hill well or had one good interval. Or you finished a hard workout. Or maybe you had one of the best workouts of the season. Relive that day’s successful moment repeatedly until you fall asleep. You just made a deposit into your success savings account.

Some of the deposits will be big; some will be small. But your account needs to grow every day. You can make a withdrawal whenever the negative, angry voice speaks to you. The week of a race is an especially good time to make withdrawals, as you begin to question your readiness.

When you feel a bit of anxiety about the upcoming race, go back and pull up one of those memories of success from your savings account. Relive it vividly. When the authoritarian voice in your head says, “You can’t,” make another withdrawal immediately. Drown out the voice with a success. When someone casually expresses doubt about your chances of success, make a withdrawal. When you step to the starting line, make a withdrawal. At these critical times, pull up the biggest successes in your account. Say to yourself, “Remember that time when I . . .”

Never deposit the bad experiences or unwelcome moments in training. Never. Let them go. They’re rubbish. Don’t relive them. Stay focused only on the positive experiences. Deposit only those experiences in your account. Withdraw only those. It works.

Fake it ’til you make it. The second thing you can do to boost confidence is to “act as if.” That means always assuming the posture and disposition of a confident athlete. Always. Act as if you are confident even if you don’t feel that way. You’ll be amazed at what that does for your self-perception.

So how does a confident athlete act? Look around at a race or group workout and find athletes who exude confidence. How do *they* act? Study them. What you will probably find is that they stand tall and proud. Their heads are up. They look people in the eyes when talking. They don’t denigrate others in order to elevate their own self-esteem. They move adeptly and fluidly—as good athletes always do. They aren’t anxious or nervous looking. They’re calm. It’s obvious they are confident; their demeanor shows it.

Now you may not feel that way all of the time, especially on race day, but act confident anyway.

To promote self-confidence, open a savings account of successes.

Fake it 'til you make it. It's remarkable how taking on the posture and demeanor of confidence breeds confidence even initially, when you're not feeling that way inside. It's not possible to be confident with a slumping posture and defeated demeanor. It's like saying no while shaking your head yes. The two don't go together. Simply "acting as if" will get you through those moments when your confidence is waning. Try it.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

There comes a time in every race when success and failure are on the line. You sense that you are at your limit. Fatigue is setting in. Your mind is willing to accept compromises: Perhaps the goal that you've worked toward for so long isn't really that important. This is the key moment of the entire race. The fully committed rider will get through it. Others will let go of their goal and settle for something less. Their passion will fade.

Commitment is simply passion for your goal. While it's obvious on race day, it must be there every other day too.

What are the details? What is it that committed athletes have that the others don't?

A few years ago, Graham Jones, PhD, a professor of elite performance psychology, published a paper in the *Harvard Business Review*. He had studied Olympic athletes in order to learn what sets those who medaled apart psychologically from the athletes who didn't medal. Dr. Jones discovered that in comparison with the non-medalists, the Olympic podium-placers:

- Paid meticulous attention to their goals
- Had a strong inner drive to stay ahead of the competition

- Concentrated on excellence
- Were not distracted by other people or athletes
- Shrugged off their own failures
- Rebounded from defeat easily
- Never self-flagellated
- Celebrated their wins
- Analyzed the reasons for their success
- Were very confident of their abilities

There were other findings in Dr. Jones's study, but these give us a good idea of what it takes to be mentally tough. They are some of the same things we've been discussing throughout this chapter: motivation, excellence, big dreams, goals, a mission, commitment, dedication, discipline, and confidence.

As you can tell from the above list, mental toughness isn't just something that mysteriously appears on race day in the lucky few. It's an everyday state of mind as you prepare for your race. It's every thought you have; it's everything you do day in and day out. Mental toughness just happens to show up during hard races.

You need one more thing to be mentally tough that Dr. Jones alluded to in his paper but didn't precisely address: patience.

PATIENCE

Success won't come quickly. Just because you have a dream, a goal, and commitment doesn't mean success is imminent. Cycling is a patience sport. And the longer your race, the more patience it takes. For example, a time trial is not so much a race as it is a test of your patience. I go to several time trials every year. It never ceases to amaze me that there are always athletes who are

Commitment is simply passion for your goal.

obviously anaerobic—they're breathing hard—only 1 mile into the race. And they still have 24 miles to go! What are they thinking?

It takes supreme patience to be a good cyclist not only in your races but also in your approach to training. Achieving true peak performance requires months and years, not hours and days. Patience is necessary. You must be ready for a long uphill battle.

How patient you are is evident even in your workouts. An impatient athlete starts a workout or a set of intervals much too fast and then fades as the session continues, finishing weakly. In a race, the impatient athlete does the same thing—starts much too fast, with unnecessary attacks, and then limps to a whimpering finish. This is often the result of being on a passionate mission—the very thing you must do to succeed. Only in this case, your dedication and determination are working against you.

Commitment must be held in check by patience if you are to succeed. You won't accomplish your high goal in the first few minutes of a key workout session or race. The first interval won't be where you achieve your goal. It's what happens late in the workout, interval set, or race that makes the difference. This is when success occurs. It takes patience to hold yourself in check and save your energy for when it really matters: later on. We usually call this "pacing," but it's actually emotion control. Patience means controlling your emotions in the early stages of anything you do.

How do you become patient? There is no easy fix. It's just something you must do every day with everything in your life. When I coach athletes who show signs of impatience, such as doing the first interval too fast, I have them repeat the workout

again and again until they get it right. If they start a race too aggressively and then fade, we have a long conversation afterward about the reason why they didn't achieve what they were capable of accomplishing. Helping an athlete learn patience is the hardest thing I have to do as a coach.

You must learn to be your own coach. Be aware of your impatience. Keep it in check. Remind yourself before a hard workout or race that you must contain your emotions early on in order to finish strong. Remind yourself at the start of the season that patience means making small gains toward your goal every day and that the process will take months. If you can learn to do all of this, you can become patient. And patience will lead to success. It's that simple.

COMMITMENT AND TENACITY

For your mission to succeed in the face of setbacks, which always happen, you must have two more things: commitment and tenacity.

There's a moment in every race when fatigue says, "Stop." Your legs are on fire, your heart is pounding fast and hard, and it hurts to breathe. Riders are coming off the back. They've accepted defeat. Their determination, evident early in the race, is gone. To stop the pain, thoughts about giving up creep in to your own mind. "Is this race really that important to me?" you ask yourself. "Why am I doing this?" This moment is the measure of who you are as a cyclist. This moment demands unyielding determination. The fully committed and tenacious rider finds a way to keep going a little bit longer.

While commitment to a goal may be quite obvious on race day, it must also be there on

Patience leads to success.

Training isn't only about preparing the body; it's also what prepares the mind.

every training ride. In fact, it's on training days when you're riding hard and feeling fatigued that you become prepared for similar situations in a race. That's why you train—to prepare for those crucial moments that test you. Training isn't only about preparing the body; it's also what prepares the mind. Just as on race day, you must have commitment and tenacity to successfully complete a hard workout that pushes your limits. This is what drives you to do several 2-minute intervals at your top-end power with minimal recovery and make the last one the hardest. That tenacity prepares you for the race-day suffering.

What is tenacity? It's sometimes called mental toughness, and many people seem to think that you either have tenacity and mental toughness or you don't. It's not that way. Athletes have varying degrees of tenacity. Whether during a race or a workout, some riders are capable of coping with extreme suffering. They have a tremendous commitment to succeed and a high level of tenacity. Others are more sensitive to suffering and are unable to hang on for very long when it gets really tough. Even though they have the physical fitness to make it, they mentally give up. They lack a strong commitment. Then there are those who throw in the towel almost immediately at the first sign of suffering. They never had commitment. They were unprepared.

Tenacity can be improved. It's cultivated by race-like training. To grow as a cyclist, your workouts need to occasionally test your limits by challenging you to keep going for just a few seconds longer. That's often all it takes. You know the scenario: Everyone is suffering. A truly motivated rider up front is driving the pace. But that rider will last only a few seconds longer. Then things will calm down. Hanging on for only a few more

agonizing seconds often determines the podium contenders, but hanging on takes tenacity.

Racing is all about managing suffering. Road race outcomes are determined by highly intense episodes that only last from a few seconds to a couple of minutes. Time trials are all about maintaining a high level of intensity on the threshold of extreme suffering for a very long time. Both have to do with fatigue. According to research done by South Africa's Tim Noakes, PhD, the fatigue you experience actually occurs in the brain. He calls this the "central governor theory." His theory is that the brain is constantly monitoring all of the signals from the body, and it decides when it's time to pull the plug. He considers it a self-protection mechanism. It prevents you from doing damage to yourself.

Overcoming the brain's reluctance to continue when you are experiencing extreme fatigue is very difficult. It takes a tremendous commitment and a will to excel bordering on survival on a battlefield. I believe such tenacity is trainable for the highly committed rider. Workouts intended to produce suffering must prepare the mind as much as, if not more than, the body. In later chapters, I'll introduce workouts and training methods that will help you do this.

How is your tenacity? Are you fully committed to your goals and dedicated to excellence in all you do? Do you remain positive even in the face of failure, accepting defeat graciously and then moving on? Do you challenge your mind to continue on for a few more seconds or minutes in the face of extreme fatigue and suffering? That's a tall order. But you already know that racing isn't easy. Being fully committed to excellence is what gives some riders a high level of mental toughness. Tenacity doesn't just mysteriously appear

Tenacity is cultivated by race-like training.

on race day in some riders. It must be worked on continuously. It's an every-single-day attitude. It's the result of hard workouts. It's every thought you have; it's everything you do. In the end, full commitment will produce a tenacious, high-performance attitude.

At the most basic level, being fully committed to your goal means you *must* train consistently. Without consistent training, there is no commitment and tenacity never develops. Missed workouts are the first sign that a rider lacks commitment. The starting point for high-performance commitment is following standard training routines. The foundation of commitment is training consistency.

CONSISTENCY AND ROUTINES

Your mind and body like routines. You're more likely to train consistently when you have regular and standard schedules in your daily life. You're also more likely to achieve your goal when things happen in a predictable manner instead of occurring at random. An example of this is something you are probably already doing: following a set pre-race routine. You may have found that you are more relaxed and mentally ready to compete if what you do before a race stays much the same from one race to the next. Your pre-race routine probably includes the food and drink you commonly consume, the timing of meals, the music you listen to, a warm-up routine, mental rehearsal, time spent talking with teammates about strategy, and myriad other thoughts and actions. The purpose of all of this is to prepare your body and mind for what is to follow: hard racing.

Having a daily routine that leads up to a workout prepares your mind and body for what's ahead. This may involve a standard time of day for training sessions, the types of workouts you do on certain days in a weekly pattern, the food and drink you take in prior to the workout, your training partners for some workouts, cycling courses unique to certain types of workouts, and lots more. Just as with racing, the purpose of weekly and daily routines is to prepare you for the stresses of training, especially on hard workout days.

When all aspects of daily workouts are random, you are likely to find that your training suffers. To overcome this, you need a weekly training plan, which is covered in Chapter 8. Your daily lifestyle routine, on the other hand, is something I can't suggest for you, as there are simply too many variables: sleep patterns; career, work, or school responsibilities; family life; time spent with friends; and any number of other things that make up your day. I strongly suggest that you give some thought to how all of these affect your training and how you can best organize them to foster excellence.

Your lifestyle routine comes down to priorities. Everything can't be top priority. Most serious riders put time spent with their family and friends first, followed by career responsibilities, and they often fit in training at the third level on their priority list. If there are more than two higher-priority activities that come before training, though, you'll frequently miss workouts. This is the commitment part of training that is so critical to achieving your goal.

Of course, only you can decide how great your commitment is to training and racing. But I can tell you this with great certainty: The higher

The foundation of commitment is training consistency.

You must create a routine that reflects your priorities.

your goal, the greater your commitment must be, and therefore the more exacting your daily routine must also be. If you read the biographies of the sport's best high-performance athletes, you will quickly see that their lives revolved around training throughout their careers. Of course they experienced interruptions in their routines, much as you will. Things happen. As a high-performance athlete, you must roll with the punches and continually make adjustments. That's just part of life.

The most crucial take-home message is that you need a standard weekly and daily routine that allows you to fit everything important into your life in the order that reflects your priorities. You've got some level of responsibility to other people, including immediate family, relatives, employers, teachers, coworkers, classmates, friends, teammates, and others. Fitting only these responsibilities into your life is difficult. Also fitting in training that meets the demands of your goal makes establishing a daily routine extremely challenging. So your goal must be realistic with regard to your life. And the higher the goal, the more important it is that you have a standard lifestyle routine in order to produce the desired result.

YOUR HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM

Let's shift gears. So far we've been examining what thoughts and actions *you* can take to race successfully. It's time to include others. The more supportive people you have in your corner, the greater the odds of your success. One of the keys for meeting the needs of all of the other people in your life is to ask them to be a part of your

high-performance team. Those close to you more than likely want to help (just as, I hope, you want to help them). Asking them to be a part of your personal support team greatly increases your commitment and motivation because you then share a sense of responsibility for the outcome with others. The feelings are mutual for everyone involved, and everyone around you takes on the mission.

Start with your family and friends. Make them aware of your goal and ask for their support and help in achieving it. At the very least, they can attend your races. With a little thought and imagination, I'm sure you can come up with many other ways they can support and assist you. Having those closest to you on your side when it comes to training and racing is a powerful motivator.

Next, include your cycling team. The camaraderie and backing of a good team is critical to your goal achievement. It goes well beyond racing. If they are aware of your goal, you will have the support of a like-minded group of riders who can help you achieve it. They can train with you, offer workout suggestions, provide encouragement, give psychological support when things aren't going well, and much more. And, of course, you should do the same for them. Having your team 100 percent behind you—and being 100 percent behind your team—goes a long way toward achieving your goal.

There are others you can include in your personal high-performance team. One of the smartest moves you can make is to enlist the help of a coach or knowledgeable mentor who can guide you as you prepare for your season. This person can often be the difference between success and failure. The higher your goal, the more important it is to have someone you completely trust pro-

viding guidance. It's ideal if your coach or mentor lives nearby, but with today's technology that is not a necessity.

I also suggest including on your team a physical therapist, a sports medicine doctor, a masseuse, a mechanic, and a bike fitter. Additional professionals to consider including are a personal trainer for gym workouts, a nutritionist, a chiropractor, and a sports psychologist. The more experts you have in your corner, the greater the likelihood of goal success.

The higher your goal, the greater the benefit of having such a team behind you. Because of their unique ways of assisting, each will help you successfully navigate the many challenges you'll face in your racing career. Tell each member of the team about your goal and how they can help you achieve it. You may never actually use some of them, such as a doctor if you don't experience any physical breakdowns during the season. But knowing that they are ready to help will boost your confidence and get you through rough patches when something isn't going right.

In addition to their unique contributions to your success as an athlete, each member of your team must also be a happy, positive, and successful person whom you like. If any of them don't fit that description, find someone who does. Surround yourself only with people who believe in and fully support you. Always avoid those who don't.

SUMMARY: MENTAL PERFORMANCE

As a coach, I've learned that all athletes are limited more by their minds than by their bodies. Mental fitness is at least as critical to an athlete's

success as physical fitness. If the mental limiter is great enough, the chances of success are severely restricted. So when interviewing an athlete who has asked for coaching, I am mostly concerned with what's going on in their minds. If the athlete has the right attitude, I know that together, we can achieve very high goals. Without at least a spark of that attitude, I've found that success is unlikely. Mental fitness can be developed if the proper attitude is present. That attitude is difficult to define and even more challenging to improve.

In this chapter I described what I look for in the mental makeup of an athlete. The first is the motivation to succeed. This has to be more than a spark because there is little a coach can do to foster motivation. It's got to come from within the athlete. The other stuff I can help the athlete foster. But not motivation.

Second, I listen for a dream. It doesn't have to be a big earth-changing dream, but there must be something there that repeatedly shows up in our initial conversation. Vague wishes don't hack it. The rider has to have been dreaming of accomplishing something for some time. It will excite and drive the athlete to excel. Lacking this, neither one of us will be motivated.

Is the rider willing to make a strong commitment to make the dream happen? This is often hard to discern, so we talk about other challenges the rider has had in any aspect of his or her life and how he or she went about pursuing them. This brings up the important characteristic of tenacity. How hard did the athlete work at pursuing the goal? How long did it take? Did he or she give up or keep going after it with a can-do attitude for a long time? Without committing to a goal and then tenaciously pursuing it, all is lost. There's no hope.

If the athlete has the right attitude, we can achieve very high goals.

Vague wishes don't hack it.

Next, I look at the athlete's lifestyle. Is it random or structured? Is there a discernible pattern to the activities of daily life such as work or school, meals, sleep, and training? Is there consistency in training, or does the athlete miss lots of workouts? Generally, good athletes lead what many would consider boring lives. They do the same sorts of things every day. If they're consistent, I have no doubt they can follow a long-term plan. This doesn't mean that someone who has a chaotic lifestyle can't succeed, but it definitely decreases the odds.

I also want to know what the athlete's family and friends think about his or her training. Are

they supportive? I've seen athletes fail primarily because those around them could not have cared less, or they may even have worked against their goal achievement. It's much more difficult to succeed when others think what you are doing is a waste of time.

When it comes to building out a high-performance team of professionals, I can help a lot. If the rider doesn't already have knowledgeable people to depend on, I will provide them. But that comes only after everything else has met my standards.

Then we set about giving shape to and defining the dream. Now the physical side of performance begins.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Joe Friel is a lifelong athlete and holds a master's degree in exercise science. He has trained and conferred with amateur and professional endurance athletes from a wide variety of sports since 1980. His coaching experience and research led him to cofound TrainingPeaks.com in 1999 with son Dirk Friel and friend Gear Fisher.

Friel is currently retired from one-on-one coaching and now updates emerging top-level coaches from several sports on best practices for preparing endurance athletes for competition, work that regularly takes him to coaching seminars around the world. He also consults with corporations in the sports and fitness industry and with national Olympic governing bodies worldwide. His Training Bible books for road cyclists, mountain bikers, and triathletes are used by several national sports federations to train their coaches.

Friel's philosophy and methodology for training athletes was developed over more than 30 years and is based on his strong interest in sports science research and his experience training hundreds of athletes with a wide range of abilities. His views on matters related to training for endurance sports are widely sought and have been featured in such publications as *VeloNews*, *Bicycling*, *Outside*, *Runner's World*, *Women's Sports & Fitness*, *Men's Fitness*, *Men's Health*, *American Health*, *Masters Sports*, the *New York Times*, *Triathlete*, and many more.

For more information on training and for personal contact, go to his blog at joefrielsblog.com and follow him on Twitter at [@jfriel](https://twitter.com/jfriel).

TRAIN TO WIN WITH JOE FRIEL

Inside this all-new *Cyclist's Training Bible*, Joe Friel—cycling's most experienced personal coach—presents the latest discoveries in cycling science, data analysis, daily planning, and skills development to help you create a personal training plan for success. Whether you are training for road races, criteriums, time trials, or gravel races, or you just need to improve your climbing, sprinting, endurance, or recovery, *The Cyclist's Training Bible* covers it all, including:

- **Power Meter Metrics:** Put cycling's most advanced science to work during every training session.
- **Timing Your Peak and Taper:** Shed training fatigue while maintaining fitness in the lead-up to your key races.
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- **Cycling Workouts:** Follow detailed workouts to build aerobic endurance, muscular force, speed skill, muscular endurance, anaerobic endurance, and sprint energy.



JOE FRIEL is an internationally recognized expert on endurance training with more than 30 years of personal coaching experience. His revolutionary approach to training and clear instruction have made *The Cyclist's Training Bible* a world-wide best-seller. Joe is also the author of *Fast After 50*, *The Power Meter Handbook*, and *The Cyclist's Training Diary*. He holds a master's degree in exercise science and is the cofounder of TrainingPeaks.
