

# The Power of Positive Self-talk



# Preamble

The following psychological resource for participants and athletes, has been developed by sport psychologist Fiona McCarthy on behalf of the NSW Office of Sport, as a key initiative of the NSW Government's Future Champions strategy.

For more information on Future Champions, please visit [www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development](http://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development)

## Getting to know the author

Fiona McCarthy is a registered psychologist, specialising in sport psychology and is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists. Fiona owns and operates Mind and Body Balance, a business she established 25 years ago.

Fiona is the Hunter Academy of Sport, Sport Psychology Consultant and a New South Wales Institute of Sport, Sport Psychology Service Provider. Over the last twenty-

five years, Fiona has assisted many teams, athletes, parents and coaches in the areas of confidence, concentration, handling pressure, motivation, goal setting, time management, performance preparation and general well-being. Fiona has worked with numerous sports, assisting recreational level athletes to professional, international, Olympic and Paralympic level athletes, reach their full potential.



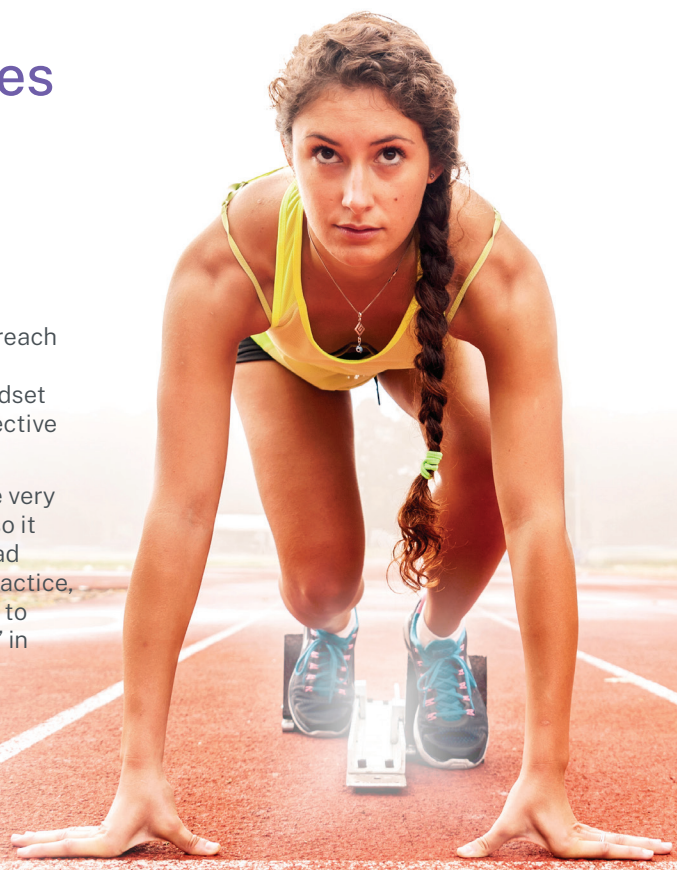
## Background to these resources

The importance of having a mental 'tool kit' to support your learning, performance and engagement on and off the sporting field.

The following resources have been developed by Fiona McCarthy to assist athletes at all levels, in understanding the importance of having a suite of mental 'tools' at their disposal. These 'tools' are practical and multidimensional and will help athletes learn and develop the necessary mental skills they require to help them navigate their way through their sporting journey with a positive mindset and achieve success on and off the field.

It is well recognised that to reach the pinnacle within sport, an athlete needs a superior mindset consisting of strong and effective mental skills and strategies.

Importantly, mental skills are very intertwined and integrated, so it is recommended that you read about and put into regular practice, a number of these resources to strengthen the 'mental tools' in your kit bag!



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# The Power of Positive Self-talk

The difference between best performances and not so good performances can lie within your thoughts.

Thoughts don't just happen - YOU and ONLY YOU are in control of what you choose to think! YOU MAKE THE FINAL DECISION.

What you think and say to yourself dictates the image you have of yourself, which consequently affects the way you behave and perform.

For example, if you keep telling yourself that you are a failure and can't perform well under pressure - then that may be exactly what happens.

## Remember



Self Talk

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Self Image

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The way you think,  
perform and behave

So, what you think and tell yourself can eventually be mirrored in the way you perform and behave.

Most limitations on performances are self-imposed, thus the greatest and toughest opponent you will ever face is YOURSELF.



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Below are some tips to help you work through and establish some key positive statements and words to use before and during competitions and training sessions.

**Example of pre-event positive self-talk**

*I can improve my self-talk by being aware of what I am saying to myself in the marshalling area before my race and making sure my thoughts are positive and kind.*

**Write down your statement**

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**Example of within-event positive self-talk**

A tennis player may use the following key words and positive statements within their game play e.g. *'Flow'* or *'Rhythm'* and *'One shot at a time'*.

**Write down your statement**

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# We hope you liked our tips

Have FUN building your psychological skills and strategies and put them into practice in and out of sport!

Remember importantly, if you are unsure of any of these tips or require further advice, please talk to your Coach, Parent or consult a Sport Psychologist.

You might like to check out our NEW animated YouTube video, Developing your mental 'tool kit' to support you in and out of sport featured within the NSW Office of Sport's Pathways and Development webpages @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development>.

Check out more tips for Participants @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/social-and-recreational-sport-participants>

And our tips for Emerging and High-Performance Athletes @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/emerging-athletes>



**Future Champions -  
Developing your  
mental 'tool kit' to  
support you in and out  
of sport.**

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