



## **Can You Train Mental Toughness?**

**By John Morrison**

What is mental toughness?

It is the attitude that makes a successful person, “willing to do what it takes to get the job done”. It takes more than relaxation, visualisation, meditation, and self-improvement techniques. All of these may play a part, but, simply put, mental toughness is adopting the attitude of “ you don’t have to like it, you just have to do it”. At the Ulster coaching Conference I will show, that through games, which I coach, that mental toughness can be trained.

These games are best used when players are fatigued, or performed under less than ideal conditions, or are used to generate such conditions. It is in these games, that players need to mentally tough. “Expect the unexpected” games I call them, and the aim is to have players comfortable when tired. Mental Toughness games make you stronger for the next day and make you more liable to persist.

Mental Toughness begins with a sense of personal awareness and accountability. Look back at today. Where were you? What did you do? Did your actions bring you closer to where you want to be? Did you add value to yourself today? You are what you think? Being in control is the bedrock of Mental Toughness. I believe that “ anyone is greater than anything that can happen to you”!

Here are a few tips to help you gain Mental Toughness in everything that you do:

- Listen to the experts, read books, the Internet, listen to cds and stories about winners- people who have overcome tremendous obstacles and set backs in order to become successful. They are people just like you, so why can’t you do it.

- No pain, no gain versus patience, pacing, and persistence. You don't need to go through physical or emotional pain in order to succeed.
- Expect to win. Don't hope to win. Keep at it- "Winning is a habit performed every day"
- Failures and handicaps have not prevented winners – you can gain more confidence and courage by working through them.
- "What next thinking": Don't dwell on answers. Ask questions. Give yourself solution-oriented feedback.
- Be a fixer, not a quitter. Write down everyday what you learnt or did better. Are my goals my own? Chasing perfection always catches excellence.
- Get comfortable with the unfamiliar. Do something different everyday. Drive a different route to training. Give your "routines" variety. Repeat, repeat, and repeat without repeating. Thus, when things go wrong in a match, you'll face them with calm and confidence.
- Don't be victim to "Ads" and "Fads". These are only there to make something else successful. Invest wisely and productively to make yourself better, especially with your time. Time is opportunity not to be missed.
- Hang out with people who will inspire you, motivate you, praise you and challenge you. Avoid people beset with problems or who are frustrated by their lack of achievement. Lead, don't follow, and be the person who inspires others.
- Focus on desired results: Winners never lose sight of their vision. They are in the present, doing what is necessary now. They stay in control of what they do and thus never worry.
- Expect the unexpected. You can't control what nature and others do. You can anticipate what might happen and prepare as best you can. You can also control your response to what happens!

**Animated "Games for Mental Toughness", by John Morrison, can be downloaded soon from [www.gaelicperformance.com](http://www.gaelicperformance.com)**