

AVOID THINKING TRAPS

Work towards a challenge mindset by confronting your thinking traps.



Challenge Mindset

How athletes perceive challenge plays a key role in building resilience. With a challenge mindset, they evaluate pressure productively, seeing it as an opportunity to learn and grow, and as something within their control.

Athletes can work on developing a challenge mindset by interrogating their thought patterns.

Avoid Thinking Traps

Once your athlete is aware of their thought traps, they can take action. By making a habit of challenging their negative thoughts, athletes can rewire their brains over time, and with practice, they will be less likely to fall into these thinking traps.



COMMON THINKING TRAPS

Here are common thinking traps that athletes sometimes fall into.

Catastrophizing

Imagining the worst-case scenario and predicting that you won't be able to deal with it.

Example: *"I'm going to miss this shot, be kicked off the team, and disappoint my parents."*

Overgeneralizing

Taking one bad experience and believing it will happen all the time.

Example: *"I got my length wrong on that delivery. I'm a terrible leg spin bowler. I will never be able to get this right."*

Personalizing

Thinking everything is about you, even when it's not.

Example: *"Coach looks upset, he must be disappointed in my performance."*

Filtering

Focusing only on the negative of a situation and ignoring the positive.

Example: *"I can't believe I missed that shot."*

Black-and-White Thinking

Only seeing the extremes of a situation.

Example: *"I planned to do a workout today, but I was too tired. Now my progress is ruined and I'll never achieve my goals!"*

Jumping to Conclusions

Judging a situation or making a value-judgment about someone without having all the facts.

Example: *"My opponent scored first and now everybody thinks I'm terrible and I'm probably going to lose."*

Labeling

Attaching a label to yourself or someone else based on one characteristic or action.

Example: *"I'm such an idiot for making this mistake."*

'Have To' Statements

Creating strict rules for how you and others should behave or act.

Example: *"I have to perform well today."*

A CHALLENGE MINDSET

When your athlete is stuck in a thinking trap, guide them through these reflection questions to help them shift their perspective.

1 Is this thought true?

a) What evidence is there to support it?

b) Is there evidence to disprove this thought?

2 Would I judge other people as harshly if they were in my position?

a) Am I being too hard on myself?

b) Is there another way I can interpret this event?

Encourage your athlete to open up to you. Be their voice of reason, guiding them out of their thinking trap with support.