

TOP TIP #9

There is no harm in seeking mental health or mental performance support.

Stress is a natural part of being a human and can be associated with both positive and negative experiences. In general, stress itself is not usually the problem, but lack of adequate coping skills can be. When a person is not coping well, it can lead to lack of balance, impairments in physical health, strained social relationships, and decreased mental wellbeing. It is important to learn how to manage and cope with stress, both in sport and in life.

HELPFUL DEFINITION:

Coping is defined as thoughts and behaviors used to manage external and internal demands that the individual finds stressful and more than they can manage. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

When it comes to stress associated with sport and/or competition, the most important first step is to “fix the fundamentals.” First step is to evaluate the balance between the three sides of the see-saw base triangle - and see if any anomalies exist in terms of nutrition, hydration, and sleep hygiene. It is also important to recognise any possible sociocultural imbalances that exist between school, sport, other extracurriculars, and life in general.

If fixing the fundamentals does not seem to resolve the problems, it is a good time to seek help from a professional. As an athlete, seeing a professional who is trained to work with athletes is recommended.

SCIENCE FACT:

For Mental Performance related concerns, it is recommended to seek help from a professional who is a Certified Mental Performance Consultant® (CMPC®) by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology. Certification as a CMPC® demonstrates that an individual has met the highest standards of professional practice in sport and performance psychology, is agreeing to adhere to ethical principles and standards, and is committed to ongoing professional development.

You can find CMPC® Certified Individuals in your area [here](#).

