

TOP TIP #3

Sport injury and peak performance exist on a continuum.

Much like riding a see-saw, being an athlete is a balancing act, characterized by ups and downs. No career in sport is linear, or indeed a continuous path of evenly spaced steps upwards towards goals (see athlete TOP TIP 10 for more details). As Simone Manuel so cleverly said it on June 20, 2024, the path to success is a construction zone!

The same applies to creating training plans – creating an effective training cycle is a continued balance between stressing the body to its limits and rest/recovery. If successful, and athlete will see performance gains, if not, the athlete is likely to experience overtraining, illness, or injury.

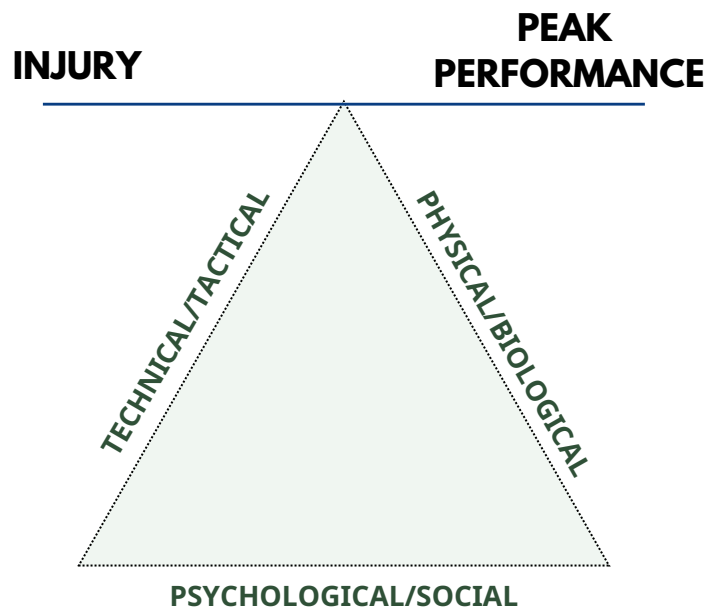
In the athletic see-saw, the board represents the athletic performance. On one end is injury – a part of sport every athlete tries to avoid – and on the other end is peak performance – the part of sport every athlete works hard toward to achieve (Arvinen-Barrow & Clement, 2019).

In swimming, particularly as the athlete's get older, achieving peak performance is typically limited to taper meets (see athlete TOP TIP 2). The rest of the time the athlete will ride the see-saw somewhere in between, with a goal to spend more time on the peak performance side of the board.

The base triangle is made up of three distinct, yet complementary sides: technical/tactical side, physical/biological side, and psychological/sociocultural side. Each side is equally important in maintaining a healthy balance and needs to be consciously worked on. If one side is neglected, or overworked to outweigh the other two sides, the base triangle will become lopsided, or scalene.

A base triangle with unequal sides will disrupt balance and will increase the likelihood of tipping over to the injury side.

FIGURE: The Athletic See Saw



Examples of Key Technical/Tactical Factors in Swimming

- Swim Economy (how much energy is used to swim a certain distance).
- Swim Technique
- Stroke Efficiency (how many strokes are used to swim a certain distance).
- Race Experience
- Race Strategy
- Practice Attendance
- Practice Efficiency
- Practice Intentionality
- Coaching

Examples of Key Physical/Biological Factors in Swimming:

- Biological characteristics (e.g., age, biological sex, height, puberty)
- Physical characteristics (e.g., endurance, power, strength, maximal oxygen consumption)
- Training intensity (in and out of the pool, including muscle care)
- Fatigue and energy levels
- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Hydration

Psychological/Sociocultural Factors

- Personality (i.e., who you are as a person)
- Thoughts (e.g., your attitudes, beliefs, expectations)
- Mood and emotions (e.g., anxiety, excitement, fear, stress)
- Behaviors (including intensity and effort)
- Social interactions (including coaches, parents, teammates)
- Culture (e.g., swimming, team, training group)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

“Research has identified stress (both physical and psychosocial) as a core psychophysiological state in performance enhancement and a significant risk factor for overtraining and injury. Since that is true, shouldn’t all performance enhancement efforts also consciously consider injury prevention?”

Critical Questions:

When considering the athletic performance base triangle, ask yourself:

1. How much intentional effort do I invest on planning and training my athlete’s technical/tactical side? What are the areas I could improve on?
2. How much intentional effort do I invest on planning and training my athlete’s physical/biological side? What are the areas I could improve on?
3. How much intentional effort do I invest on planning and training my athlete’s psychological/social side? What are the areas I could improve on?
4. How much intuition goes into planning and coaching my athlete’s technical/tactical side?
5. How much intuition goes into planning and coaching my athlete’s physical/biological side?
6. How much intuition goes into planning and coaching my athlete’s psychological/social side?



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❤️ If I leave those who are still reading with anything...
The path to success — is a construction zone —it’s usually found on the road less traveled. It’s not linear. When you have a deep desire and drive to be successful at something or be your absolute best, at some point along the way, you will encounter road blocks, obstacles, and rough patches. There will be setbacks and sometimes delays. But, stay focused and consistent. Don’t lose sight of your ultimate goal. And give yourself permission to feel whatever comes your way, BUT never give up. The hard work will eventually pay off. So pour in! Fill the tank. Buckle up. And enjoy the journey and all the lessons it has to teach you on the road to success. Maybe you’ll look back and say, “I did!” ❤️

Welcome: You’ve all just been introduced to Simone 2.0



**Simone Manuel, June 20, 2024, reflecting
on making her 3rd Olympic team
#PARIS2024**

