

Train What You Know by Troy Bassham

It doesn't matter how much you know about your sport. What is more important is are you training what you know? As an athlete, we are on a journey of continuous learning. Just when we think we know everything that is needed to excel we find out new information and gain new knowledge that could help us become more successful. The key word is could. If we are not careful, we will slow our progress because in order to be successful we must master the knowledge we possess.

The problem with this continuous learning journey is that it can get us off track. This is why you must train on what you know. I have the privilege working with young athletes and I see many of them falling in this trap of learning more and more instead of mastering the knowledge they have.

An example of this is the mental program. I spend three days a week working with junior golfers and teaching them the Mental Management System and how to use it in their sport. The mental program is a vital tool for the golfer and can help them stay focused before the shot. With every player, they see immediate improvement in their focus and can't wait to use it on the course. The problem occurs when the player takes the information and tries to implement it during competition without mastering the knowledge learned.

The common misconception is that once I know how to do something I can repeat it with proficiency. This cannot happen until the individual masters what they have learned. Once this is achieved they can now move forward and learn and apply the knowledge to their sport. Without careful planning and discipline to stick to the plan, we are in the position of letting the environment control our time and focus.

By training what you know, you are able to master the skill and keep that skill sharp throughout your career. It is important to grow and learn new techniques and skills, but not at the expense of what you should have previously mastered. I teach the golfer how to run a mental program before I teach them how to properly reload the shot. This is done on purpose, because if the player cannot consistently execute the mental program they will not be able to consistently execute a proper reload.

Ask yourself the following question, "Am I training what I know and mastering my skill, or I'm I practicing and trying to learn new things all the time?" The top performers are constantly training areas that they have mastered and add new parts to their game when it's appropriate to their stage of progression. If you follow this example you will not only reach new levels of achievement but also have more consistent results.

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