

Couch to 10km!

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This workbook was created with the intention to help individuals strive towards the goal of completing a 10km run through the use of mental skills training. It will address the following four skills: goal setting, motivation, barrier planning and positive self-talk. This workbook also includes cognitive strategies to help during running.

1. Goal setting

Goal setting involves setting a variety of goals – long-term, short-term, daily, among others. It can help motivate you, but also help you track your progress. In this case, your long-term goal would be to complete a 10km run. But there are many goals you can set along the way to help you reach that goal. For example, setting distance goals to help you get to the 10km goal or time goals (i.e., how quickly you can run a certain distance).

Use the table below to set yourself some short-term goals to help you achieve your long-term goal. It may be helpful to keep in mind how many weeks you intend to include, distance, and speed. Each short-term goal should increase in difficulty to help you achieve the long-term goal (think of a staircase with each step being a short-term goal and the long-term goal is at the top).

(Durand-Bush, 2016; Weinberg & Gould, 2015)

Long-term goal	10km run
	<p>What date do I want to achieve this goal? What is my timeline?</p> <p>What is the time range I would like to complete the run?</p>
Short-term goals	

SMARTTEST goals is a technique used to help you set your goals (created by Durand-Bush, 2016).

Specific	Create goals that are precise and positive based on what you want to accomplish. Ex. Improve my <u>running</u> distance.
Measurable	Create measurements/quantify your goals to determine your accomplishments. Ex. Improve my running distance from 5km to 10km.
Action-based	Describe the actions you need to attain your goals. Ex. Keep a steady pace to help me maintain my energy, make sure foot ends up under knee to prevent injuries, focus on pushing off the ground to help with move forward. Practice this every time I run.
Realistic	Make sure your goals are challenging but also attainable (based on where you are at right now). Ex. I can run 5km and I have my trainer's support.
Time-based	Make a deadline to achieve your goals. Ex. Achieve my goal by X date (June 1 st)
Elastic	Create a zone/flexible goals. (Provides flexibility for good and bad days). Ex. Improve my running distance by 4-7km (which would be 9-12km).
Sensation-matched	Write down the sensations/feelings you want to have while working towards attaining your goals. Ex. I want to feel competent, competitive, and optimistic while improving my running distance.
Trustworthy	Decide how many times you have to repeat your goal to trust that you are ready to increase the difficulty (move on to the next short-term goal). Ex. I can run 6km for 4 days of the week (ready to increase distance).

(Durand-Bush, 2016)

Use the table below to help you set goals (long-term and short-term).

Short Term Goal:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Action-based	
Realistic	
Time-based	
Elastic	
Sensation-matched	
Trustworthy	

One important note about goal setting – you should put a reminder of your goal somewhere you will see it often and revise your goals frequently to make adjustment as you experience setbacks or make progress.

(Durand-Bush, 2016)

2. Motivation

There are many different types of motivation, we will focus on internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) motivation. It is important to have a mix of both. Internal motivations involve looking inward for why you are doing what you're doing (i.e., pride, confidence, etc.). External motivations involve rewards that are outside of the yourself (i.e., money, trophy, etc.).

(Durand-Bush, 2016; Weinberg & Gould, 2015)

Write down some internal and external motivations for completing a 10km run.

Internal Motivation	External Motivation

3. Barrier/Action Planning

It is important to be prepared for anything that could get in the way of you attaining your goal. Creating an action plan for potential barriers may help decrease excuses and increase your chances of achieving your goals. This should include barriers that may try to stop you before you start your run or could occur during your run. Everyone's barriers and action plans will be different based on your environment, strengths, and areas of improvement. These barriers can be internal (i.e., feeling down) or external (i.e., thunderstorm).

(Durand-Bush, 2016)

Examples:

Barrier: What if I get tired. Action plan: walk for 1 minute and then start running again.

Barrier: There is bad weather. Action plan: run on the treadmill or another day that week.

Barriers/"What ifs"	Action Plan

4. Positive Self-Talk

What you say to yourself matters. Your brain and body are listening to what you are telling yourself. Create positive self-talk statements that you can say to yourself before, during and after your runs. These statements should be personal. Keep them short and specific. These can include “I can”, “I will”, “I am” statements. Avoid “I can’t”, “I won’t” or tentative “I think”, “I hope”.

This can take time – be aware of your self-talk and practice implementing your statements.

Before	
During	
After	

5. Cognitive Strategies for Runners

Below are some great strategies to use to remain mindful during your run and help you cope during times when it gets hard. (Developed by Saschs, 1984).

Association: Ask yourself, how does my body feel right now? How is my stride? How is my posture? How is my respiration? How do my feet feel? How do my calves feel? How do my thighs feel? Be aware of all the sensations your body is experiencing in the here and now.

Dissociation/right-brain activities:

- Thinking of music (without the lyrics): pick a song you enjoy or an instrumental piece.
- Painting a picture: visualize yourself painting a picture (an object, a person, a place).
- Thinking of faces: visualize familiar faces (i.e., a loved one). Focus on all details.
- Focusing on colours of the environment: focus on/name the colours you see around you as you run (i.e., streetlights, dirt, trees, grass, cars, etc.).
- Concentrating on a spot in front of you: look towards the ground at a forty-five-degree angle. Focus your gaze at that spot, as you run, what you see/focus on will change.

Dissociation/left-brain activities:

- Problem solving: think about a current problem you are experiencing in your life. Come up with various solutions and a pros and cons list to each course of action.
- Counting: count how many times you see a particular object (i.e., a car, a tree, an animal, etc.).
- Issues: have a debate around a controversial issue in the world. Think of points for both sides of the argument and make a decision on logic rather than emotion.
- Arithmetic: solve mathematical problems in your head (i.e., multiplications or divisions).
- Letter writing: in your head, write a letter to someone (i.e., a friend). Think about the layout of the letter and what you would say.

(Saschs, 1984)

YOU GOT THIS!

References

- Durand-Bush, N. (2016). *Getting mentally fit for sport and life: A workbook to optimize performance and well-being*. University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada.
- Sachs, M.L. (1984). *The Mind of the Runner: Cognitive Strategies Used During Running* in M.L. Sachs and G.W. Buffone, *Running as Therapy: An Integrated Approach*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.
- Weingberg, R., & Gould, D. (6th ed.)(2015). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.