

# HOW TO ATTAIN THE 7 MENTAL TOUGHNESS TRAITS OF TIGER WOODS

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**Do you admire the determination of champion golfers like Tiger Woods? When you watch them perform under pressure and pull off astonishing golf shots, do you ever wonder what they're thinking about to be able to play so well when it absolutely matters? Would you like to hit your golf shots solidly and accurately under intense pressure like they can?**

Golfers who possess the mental toughness traits of Tiger Woods have developed a psychological edge that enables them to:

- By and large manage the pressure of tournament competition better than their fellow competitors.
- Perform more consistently and better than their fellow competitors by remaining steadfast, focused, certain, and in control of their golf skills and emotions under pressure.

Many people mistakenly believe that mental toughness is something only top class athletes possess. Still others think that it's a God given gift bestowed on a blessed few. But this is simply not true.

You can learn how to develop mental toughness so that you are better able to control your thoughts, emotions and behaviours when it really matters to you. Being mentally tough refers to the effectiveness of your mental skills when you perform. But what are these mental skills?

One way to recognize mental toughness skills is to think of a top golfer like Tiger Woods when he is in a really competitive mood in a major golf tournament. What do you notice about his behaviour that stands out for you?

I've asked this question to many of the golfers who have attended my golfing school over the years and it's surprising how many see similar characteristics in his behaviour. The most common response is his 'never give up' attitude, which is one of the traits of mental toughness.

Of all the psychological toughness characteristics Tiger displays though, it's his ability to 'dig deep' when it matters most that I believe golfers most admire in him. Who can forget his fifteen foot putt on the last green at the US Open at Torrey Pines to get into a playoff with Rocco Mediate?

**He has developed the ability to completely trust his golf skills and hit shots with a clear head, without worrying about the consequences.**

You can learn how to develop your mental toughness skills so that you increase your feelings of personal control and confidence over your performances on the golf course, especially when the pressure is on, just like Tiger Woods.

Following are the seven mental toughness traits of Tiger Woods that you can develop to build increased confidence, control and positive energy every time you tee it up.

## **1. Believe in Yourself**

I know it's a cliché, and you've probably heard it said many times before, but believe me, having a 'rock solid' belief in your ability to achieve your goals on the golf course is the first step in developing your mental toughness skills. Start by setting realistic goals for yourself that focus more on being excellent at

the process of hitting golf shots that are under your control rather than focusing on the outcome of your golf shots that aren't.

You are in control of your game, if you are in control of your thoughts and feelings. Tiger Woods completely believes in his ability to hit his golf shots without worrying about what 'might happen.'

Ask yourself these powerful questions before you hit your golf shot; "what is the worst thing that could happen if I hit this golf shot?" and then follow that up with "what's the best thing that could happen if I hit this golf shot?" Once you have evaluated the level of risk, trust yourself to hit your shot with confidence.

## **2. Strong Success Drive**

Do you have a BIG reason for succeeding at golf? Having a strong desire and a well developed sense of purpose is what drives you towards better results. It's hard to play well under pressure when it doesn't matter about your results, or you don't want the results badly enough.

We can all see that Tiger really wants to win, and this overwhelmingly influences those around him to also believe it as well. There's an old saying that goes; "you become what you think about all of the time" which really is the secret to developing your 'golf success drive.'

Clearly imagine yourself achieving your golf goals everyday and you will increase your sense of urgency to achieve those goals, which will fuel your internal drive and ultimately your results. Human beings with a strong sense of purpose can accomplish incredible results if the goal is worthy enough. If you want to perform to your absolute best then you need to develop a clear goal and go after it with the passion and drive of Tiger Woods.

## **3. Get Over It and Get On With It**

Your ability to bounce back from set-backs on the golf course with a much more focused determination is a powerful stimulus for playing your golf shots with a high degree of control under pressure. This requires you to develop a 'let go' attitude when you hit shots that lead to double bogeys and worse.

By understanding that you cannot control the outcome of your shots without doing a good job of controlling the process, will help you to recognize the value in accepting that many of your golf shots even with the best of attitudes will sometimes finish up in places you didn't want it go anyway. Get over the disappointment of the golf shot and get on with playing golf. Leave the disappointment of the golf shot back at the scene of the disaster.

## **4. The Unbreakable Golf Swing**

There's a saying that goes; "the first thing to break down under pressure is the last thing that you practiced." Maintaining your golf swing technique under the stress of competition is a challenge for any golfer but fortunately there are a couple of simple keys that will make it easier for you to hit straighter and more consistent shots when it counts.

- The first thing to do is monitor your stance, hips and shoulder alignment. Shot-making problems arise when your alignment is out because it principally affects the sequencing of your golf swing. To keep a careful check on your alignment develop a simple to do pre-swing-routine that carefully incorporates alignment of your club-face and body parts. The better your pre-swing routine, the better your chance of hitting your golf shots with a square alignment on the golf course.

- Grip pressure is also very important to monitor because of its important relationship to club-face and club-head control. You should hold the golf club light enough to sense the dead weight of the club-head, and tight enough that the grip doesn't move in your hand when you swing and hit shots.

Remember this; tight golf grips kill golf swings! If ever your grip was going to get tighter, it would be when you are under pressure, so be aware of your grip pressure-'feel the club-head' when you have to hit your golf shot under the gun.

## **5. How to Cope When it Counts**

Because it matters to you to play your best, you need to accept that competition anxiety is to be expected. Embrace the idea that you are very comfortable and can easily cope with the stress of performing your best in a competition. Consider this simple but accurate statement that Olympic athletes read as they enter the US Olympic Training Complex in Colorado Springs. "The only pressure that exists is the pressure you put on yourself."

You can cope with any amount of golf stress by focusing your attention on your breathing. Breathe in to a count of four, hold, and then breathe out to a count of four. Do this continually and you will notice the calming effects of this simple yet effective exercise. Breathe purposefully when it matters and you can cope with any pressure situation you're confronted with more easily.

## **6. Why Survive When You Can Thrive**

Have you ever been scared of failing at something? I bet you have, I know I have, and it's a normal reaction to something that isn't real, but feels very real to us. That's right, it's not real, it only happened in your mind. But if you practice it enough, you can definitely turn it into your reality. It's a pretty simple formula for success really. In this case its success at achieving a negative result.

Focusing on the negative aspects of something for long enough will come true for you. I believe that competition does the same thing to golfers. That is, golfers focus on failing, and imagine it into reality. You never get to enjoy and even thrive on the pressure of competition when you're frightened of 'what might happen.' This explains how golfers are able to find a way to destroy a perfectly good round of golf by expecting that something bad will happen before the end of the round is completed.

The next time you're going to play in an important competition take the time to focus on all the good feelings and thoughts of you totally enjoying the experience of playing and performing each golf shot in the event. You'll be amazed at how much fun you can have competing when you change your attitude of playing golf in a competition to 'playing every golf shot' in the competition.

## **7. Nothing Can Distract You**

The secret to performing at your best under pressure is to control what you're paying attention to in the moment. There's a great saying that goes; "your energy flows where your attention goes" which is so true. Remaining fully-focused on the shot at hand in the face of competition distractions demands that you control what you pay attention to.

There are two things that I want you to learn to control here that will help you;

- Firstly you need to control you're the direction of your intention. Exactly what is it that you want to do with your golf shot? Specifically what is your intention or objective? The behaviour of the shot needs to be very clear in your mind and also needs to be something that you know you can do.

- Secondly you need to focus your attention on your intention. You see once you've decided what your intention is, and then you need to make sure that you keep your attention on it. By never really being clear enough about what you want to do with the golf ball, it becomes difficult to maintain a sharp level of focus.

So there you have it, the seven mental toughness traits of Tiger Woods. These traits are really important if you want to perform at your very best under the pressure of a competition.

By developing Tiger's mental toughness traits of;

- 1. Believe in Yourself**
- 2. Strong Success Drive**
- 3. Get Over It and Get On With It**
- 4. The Unbreakable Golf Swing**
- 5. How to Cope When it Counts**
- 6. Why Survive When You Can Thrive**
- 7. Nothing Can Distract You**

You will perform with confidence, consistency and positive energy whenever you play golf in any competitive situation that demands that you are at your very best.

"Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end. Failure is something we can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing." - Denis Waitley – Sports Psychologist