THE ROAD to SUCCESS

Have you missed a game winning shot?

If you have then you and Ray Allen have something in common. For those that don’t know, Ray Allen was one of the greatest shooters in NBA history. He missed 6 and made 6 game winning shots in his career.

Ran, swam or rowed a race that you lost?

Usain Bolt, 4 time Olympic gold medal winner was plagued with injuries for 3 years early in his career. He made the 2004 Athens Olympics but was eliminated in the first round. He would later set world records and win gold in the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Games.

Tried out for a team that you didn’t make?

Michael Jordan, one of the greatest players in NBA history did not make his JV high school basketball team. He went on to win 6 NBA championships.

This is a message on mindset and what it takes to succeed. Understanding failure is essential to those traveling the road to success.

This is a lesson that I lived. I loved sports growing up. When I recall my childhood it’s the first memory that pops into my head. I played them all: baseball, soccer, track, but my passion resided on the basketball court. As a 7th grader I made the 8th grade team and as a 9th grader I found myself on the freshman roster. As a 10th grader, when the roster was posted, my name wasn’t listed. Failure found me, how I responded molded me.

It was the lowest point I’ve ever felt. I was bitter and filled with negativity. For 5 months I quit basketball and swore I’d never play again. Then I met a coach that would change my life. He filled me with positivity, believed and invested in me. He inspired me to take action and extend my reach. That year I worked my tail off in the weight room, on court and in the classroom. The next year, I made the varsity team. To this day, it is one of my greatest accomplishments.

My coach helped me see that failure was not a roadblock but rather a detour. After high school I continued my playing career in college. Basketball taught me many life lessons, gave me teammates that I now call brothers and a memory bank that I will cherish forever. I owe it all to my coach’s direction and him not letting me wave the white flag.

It you aren’t failing you aren’t trying hard enough. When failure finds you don’t turn away. Embrace it, survive and adapt. The road to success is never paved perfect. It is always under construction and you must respond to every ounce of adversity. Keep your hard hat on, utilize your coach’s toolbox and keep working!

The Holiday Season
and Athlete Fueling

Faster than a speeding bullet, the holiday season is upon us. As athletes, you receive guidance on how to eat to fuel your performance. But what does that mean for this time of year, which is notorious for focusing on food, food…and more food? As you get ready for winter break, consider some of these tips to balance your seasonal performance goals with being able to have your holiday season favorites:

1. Build your favorites into your plan.

There's no need to try and completely avoid your favorite green bean casserole or apple pie. In fact, take the time to identify which foods are your favorites and build those into your meal. Minimize grabbing some of everything on the table just because it's there.

2. Remember the 80/20.

The 80/20 concept is a good guideline for choosing foods on a regular basis, so keep it going during the holiday season. Be certain to choose quality, nutritious foods 80% of the time, and build in those favorite foods (but maybe not so nutritious) 20% of the time. Not only do you get to have them, but it also can prevent overeating them in the long run because they are allowed.

3. Avoid “saving up” for meals.

A common practice around holiday parties and dinners is to limit eating during the day in order to “save up” for the big meal. Unfortunately this approach can backfire! Instead, continue to have your standard breakfast and lunch to prevent showing up ravenous at a holiday feast, which often leads to overeating.

4. Keep up with training.

Being active doesn't give folks a free pass to eat anything and everything over the holidays, but it does help with weight maintenance, stress management, and maintaining your season-appropriate fitness level. Along with a balanced diet, follow the training recommendations of your coaches to ensure you return to campus ready to go. Happy holidays to everyone & enjoy!
“We all need to train both hard and smart, but brawn without brain is a disaster waiting to happen, while brain without brawn leads to disappointment and unfulfilled promise. Like virtually everything else in life, the truth resides in the middle, not on either extreme.”
–Charles Staley

We can train both smart and hard. In fact, training smart means training hard. What athletic development programs of advanced to elite level athletes lack are often intelligent training practices. Unfortunately we have “professional” trainers out there who only provide their clients with motivational speeches and coaching cues limited to the words “more” and “harder.” They are in the business of selling their training and only interested in providing you with what they know you will believe. Why? Because you “felt the burn” and most importantly, you came back for more! You may say, “I got results”. I’m sure you did, but at what cost? Maybe you did 70 consecutive high-depth jumps, 3 days a week, and could jump higher as a result. Should we mark that down in the strength and conditioning science journals as being the magic protocol for improving lower body explosiveness? Absolutely not! You would not keep up a “training protocol” like that for very long without getting injuring yourself, unless you are lucky or have good genes.

You may say “well I’m doing that now, and I’m not hurt.” This may very well be true... it is also true that right now there are people smoking cigarettes who have not developed lung cancer, but as I’m sure you know, that does not mean smoking behavior is unrelated to the development of lung cancer. “Hard work” was good enough to get you through the earlier stages of your athletic career. But now you are a high level athlete and should be at the point in your development where training smart is necessary for you to tap into the rest of your genetic potential. At this stage, you’ll find yourself competing against other athletes who are, believe it or not, working just as hard as you are. What is going to separate you from them? Training with a rhyme and reason will make the difference, and that can only be accomplished with an evidence-based approach.
What does your daily schedule look like? One great way to boost productivity is to write down, in order of importance, 6-8 tasks to complete each day. This strategy, from productivity consultant Ivy Lee, should be done at the end of the day in preparation for the next days’ work. Begin the day by working in order of importance, and carry each item over to the next day that isn’t finished. These don’t need to be only homework related tasks. The simple act of crossing off an item creates a sense of “victory” that makes you want to accomplish more. Give it a try, and maybe toss in some unconventional tasks: spend 2 total minutes at the bottom of a deep squat; do 25 total push-ups throughout the day. The goal is to set a task you know you can achieve, and win the day by crossing it off the list. You might make each day marginally more difficult (maybe 2 minutes in the deep squat becomes 3 minutes; maybe 25 push ups becomes 30). This little tip will help you accomplish more in less time, guaranteed! For more information on this, check out James Clear’s article, “The Ivy Lee Method: The Daily Routine Experts Recommend for Peak Productivity.”