



NORTHERN IRELAND  
**FENCING**



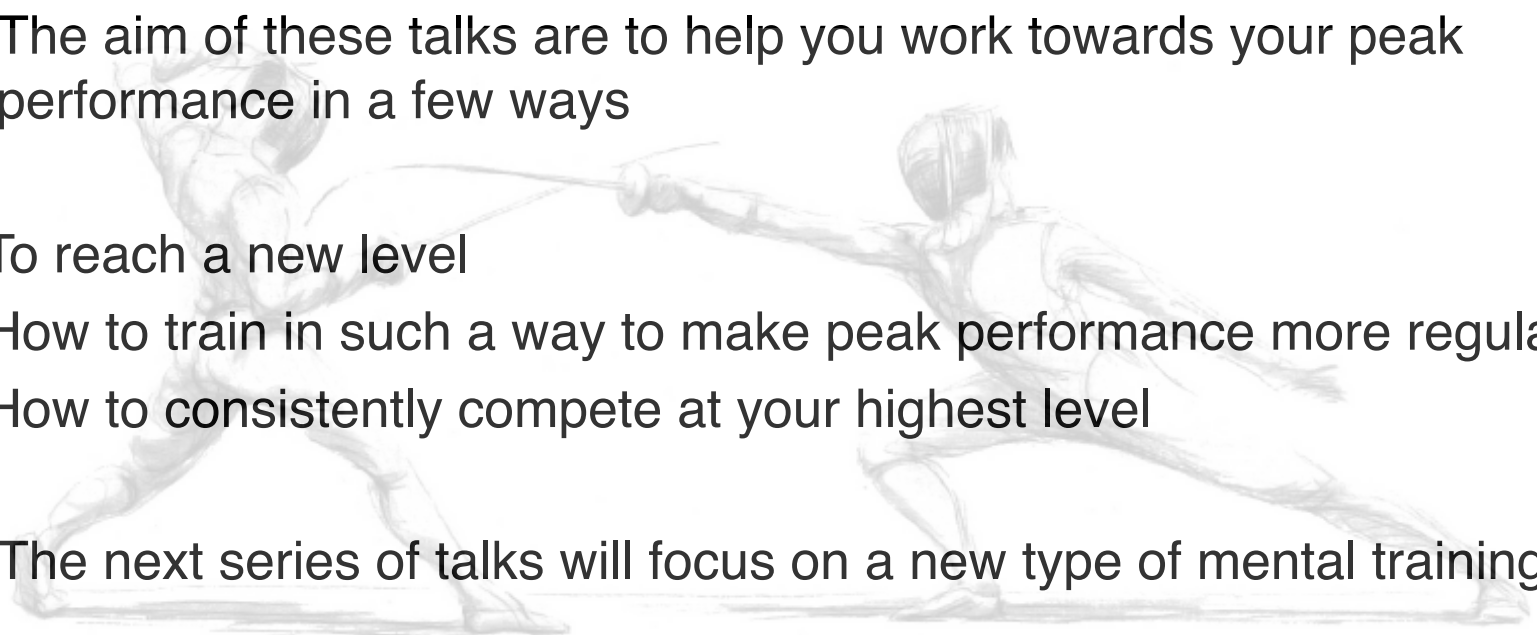
# Mental Training

## Self-Talk

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Academy – 18/02/17

# Mental Training for Fencers

- Peak performances are those rare moments when everything comes together for an athlete
- The aim of these talks are to help you work towards your peak performance in a few ways
  1. To reach a new level
  2. How to train in such a way to make peak performance more regular
  3. How to consistently compete at your highest level
- The next series of talks will focus on a new type of mental training



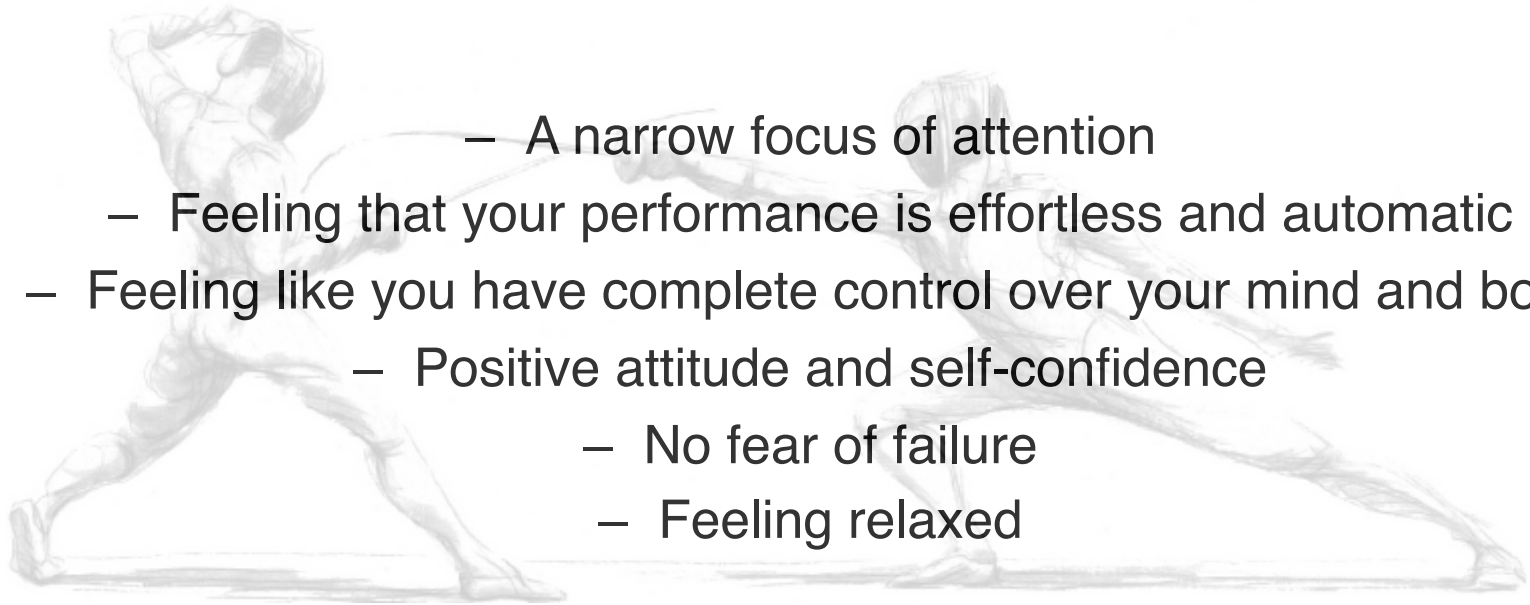
# Peak Performance

- Peak performance is sometimes called ‘being in the zone’
- What are the characteristics of ‘being in the zone’?



# Peak Performance

- Peak performance is sometimes called ‘being in the zone’
- What are the characteristics of ‘being in the zone’?
  - A narrow focus of attention
  - Feeling that your performance is effortless and automatic
  - Feeling like you have complete control over your mind and body
    - Positive attitude and self-confidence
    - No fear of failure
    - Feeling relaxed



# Self-Talk

- **Successful** athletes are **confidant** athletes
- Self-talk can be a self fulfilling prophecy
- It is a simple process of using key words or phrases to reinforce your goals or help maintain a positive mental state
- It is easy to lose focus by dwelling on your mistakes (examples?)
- Self-talk helps to keep you in the here-and-now and:
  1. Turns a nonproductive mood into a productive one
  2. Helps maintain intensity during a long bout
  3. Helps to manage worry



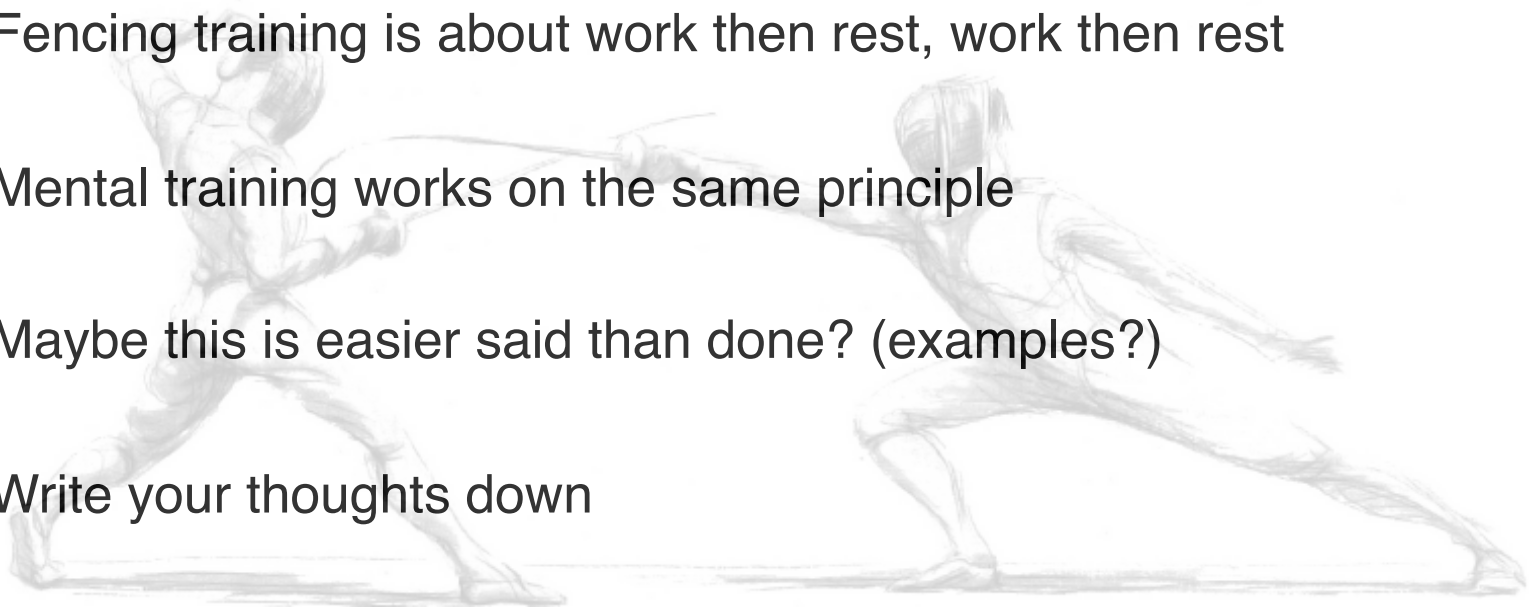
# Self-Talk 1: Problem Solving

- Converting worry into productive action
- If you don't know how to solve a problem, this can lead to procrastination and worry
- STEP 1: Identify a specific worry
- STEP 2: Create a list of possible solutions, along with the pros & cons
- STEP 3: If this doesn't work, seek advice (coach, parent, teammate)
- Some things in life cannot be changed. When this happens, it is important to feel okay with yourself



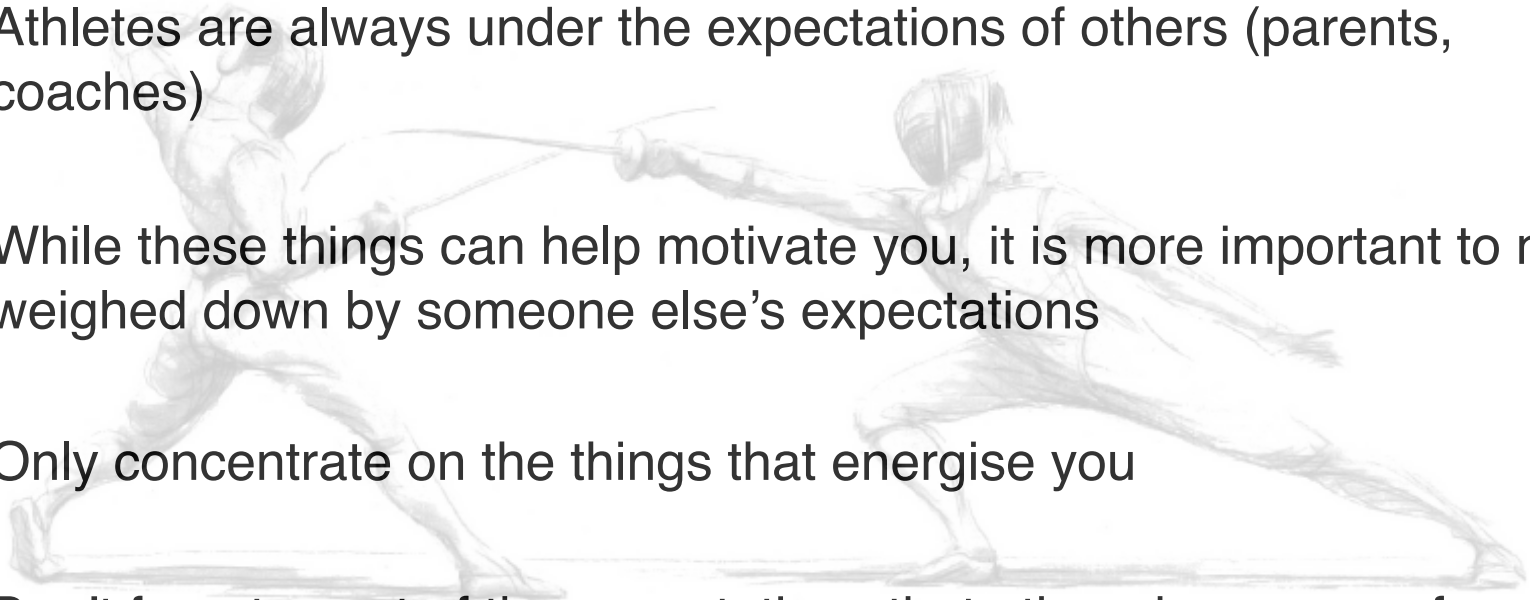
# Self-Talk 2: Thought Saving

- Thought saving is taking a break from worry
- Fencing training is about work then rest, work then rest
- Mental training works on the same principle
- Maybe this is easier said than done? (examples?)
- Write your thoughts down



# Self-Talk 3: Thought Review

- Thought review is about managing your expectations
- Athletes are always under the expectations of others (parents, coaches)
- While these things can help motivate you, it is more important to not be weighed down by someone else's expectations
- Only concentrate on the things that energise you
- Don't forget, most of the expectations that others have come from the expectations you have for yourself





# Self-Talk 4: Thought Stopping

- Thought stopping is moving your focus from negative to positive
- Your logical brain may sometimes be in conflict with your emotions (your competitive goals vs. fear of losing)
- Thought stopping helps your logical brain and your emotional brain work together
- It is a quick, intense technique for asserting your desire to overcome your fears

STEP 1: “STOP” – say it like you mean it

STEP 2: Compose yourself with smooth, deep breaths

STEP 3: Refocus on a key fencing action or thought

