

Train like an Olympian

Olympic athletes inspire us with their fierce discipline and natural talent as they smash records, going higher, farther and faster. Their can-do spirit motivates us all to take on new challenges.

Whether your goal is to complete your first marathon or improve your golf game, there are lessons to be learned from the best of the best.

Saint Louis University assistant professor of physical therapy, Chris Sebelski, gives this guidance on how to train like a champion:

- **Set a goal and break it down.** For instance, if you're training to get in shape for a cross-country hiking trip, you might aim to walk 3 miles a day for the first 2 weeks and build up to 10 miles a day by the end of 10 weeks.
- **Cross-train.** Cross-training reduces risks of overtraining and helps avoid injury. It also enhances muscle performance and stimulates the mind so you don't become bored by too much repetition.
- **Work out with others.** Olympic athletes don't train alone and they don't train only with those at the same skill level. Run with different people. On one day, partner with someone slower than your normal pace. You'll stay out longer and practice endurance. Another day, run with someone faster than your average pace. You'll do a more intense cardio workout.
- **Create a team.** Olympic athletes know that they cannot do it on their own. You shouldn't expect to either. Seek people and methods that can help you accomplish your goal. It could be a face-to-face session with a trainer, a nutrition class, or an online chat room of like-minded people.
- **Find your motivation.** Olympians use lots of techniques to manage their emotions. This year, for example, athletes reported using yoga, meditation, and even watching their favorite TV shows to calm themselves before an event.

- **Put on an Olympic attitude.** For most of us, our jobs, families and personal commitments mean we can't spend as much time training as a world champion might. But you can adopt the mentality of an Olympian during the time you do train.
- **Enjoy.** Regardless of the scale of your goal, train for and accomplish a physical goal you set for yourself. Crossing that finish line is a feeling unlike any other.

