



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



Self-confidence

Self-confidence is the belief that you can successfully perform a desired task or certain behaviour. Confident athletes believe in themselves and their ability to acquire the necessary skills and competencies (both physical and mental) to reach their potential. Self-belief motivates all performance, so remember:

'If I believe I can or I believe I can't, then I'm probably right.'

Confidence in any activity comes from:

- > knowing **what** to do
- > knowing **how** to do it
- > knowing **when** to do it
- > having the **resources** and **ability** to do it
- > **wanting** to do it.

We lose confidence because we:

- > start focusing on things other than our performance
- > start focusing on things outside of our control (for example, the past, the future, other peoples' performance, etc.)
- > start focusing on outcomes, rather than the process
- > become overly critical of ourselves and focus on the negatives, ignoring the positive aspects of our effort and performance.

We build confidence by:

- > working hard at training
- > practising good self-management
- > rewarding ourselves when successful
- > recording/logging our successes.

To enhance self-confidence you need to take responsibility for your successes and failures. It is important to remember that when you talk about success you mean performing to the best of your ability rather than winning. When you succeed you need to remember that it is because you are a good athlete and have worked hard, not because you are lucky. Similarly, when you fail to achieve your best you need to remember that there is probably a logical explanation and that you should talk it over with your coach. It is never because you are not good enough.

SELF-CONFIDENCE MYTHS

Myth: You either have it or you don't.

Truth: Every individual has varying degrees of self-confidence.

Myth: Only positive feedback and success builds confidence.

Truth: For some athletes, constructive feedback and unsuccessful performances can motivate them to achieve their goals, and subsequently increase their self-confidence.

TAKE ACTION

You can develop this skill further with the support of a performance psychologist. If you have access to a performance psychologist speak to them of your interest in this area. If not, your coach, state institute or academy, or national sporting organisation, are good places to start looking for further help.