

Mental side of sports: It's not just for Olympians

August 15, 2012

The Wall Street Journal:

Now that you've been watching the world's top athletes compete in London, you may be inspired to go out and pursue your own sport at, um, less than an Olympic level. But even without their talent or practice regimens, you can take a lesson from what Olympians know: The mental game matters, too.

Experts say even weekend warriors can benefit from the kinds of mental strategies elite athletes follow, things like following a routine or adopting a mantra to guide you through crucial movements.

Megan Rapinoe has a routine at the Olympics. The midfielder on the American soccer team says she gets "into the zone" on the way to the stadium by putting on headphones and listening to Florence and the Machine, Kings of Leon and a little Katy Perry.

Make sense? Actually, most people don't have much of a clue about what goes into the mental side of sports, says Daniel Gould, a professor of applied sports psychology at Michigan State University.

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