

# Mindset Matters

As a runner, you're aware of the brain-body connection and how it can affect performance in a workout and a race. Exercise science points directly at the symbiotic nature of these two systems, and we are beginning to understand how powerful this connection can be. Your mindset makes a difference in your athletic performance.

We all hear the little voices in our heads during a training run. Do you take the time to listen to what they are saying? This incessant chatter is actually a biological marvel. Most athletes have been conditioned to silence their inner oracle, but it is in your best interest to let it speak up! In our society we are hounded by mantras like "shut up and run" and "pain is weakness leaving the body." This is how people end up hurt. I'm not saying that every mile you run will be fundamentally life-altering, but what I am implying is that your human organism is more intelligent than your rational mind and it could do you some good to be aware of what it is trying to tell you.

We are adapted to be chronic students, learning on a subconscious level. Everything you see, every sensation you feel and every experience you have is an opportunity for you to understand something new. In running, every step we take literally creates new neurological pathways in our brain. Our workouts are not just miles for the sake of mileage, but are an opportunity to engage both our mental and physical components. They become an opportunity to enhance communication between these seemingly separate parts of ourselves, and allow us to begin to understand the amazingly complex symbiosis that truly exists.

I always like to ask my runners how they feel after a training run. Being more aware of how we feel helps tune us in to the signals we are receiving. Ask yourself what you are learning, and how you should respond based on that knowledge. I know it's tempting to sync your [Garmin](#) and post a sweaty selfie immediately after your workout, but try keeping a running journal instead. I know it's easy to stretch for two seconds then chug some water before hustling on to the next part of your day. Rather, remain still, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Your body wants to teach you something every second of every day, and it is asking you to respond.