

CHANGE YOUR WEAKNESSES INTO YOUR POWER

If you're content with the best you have done as an athlete, you'll never be the best you can be. If you really want to get better, you'll go out of your way to change your weaknesses into your strengths. It's not easy, but it's an exciting challenge that will make you grow as an athlete and as a person.

First, determine what your weaknesses are. Strong competition will bring that out. Analyze where you need improvement. Then, turn that weakness into your strength.

The best athletes work hard to overcome their weaknesses. It's fun, and easy, to practice your strengths because those are what you do best. However, the only way to get better is to work long and hard on your weaknesses in order to turn them into strengths. It all boils down to how good you really want to be.

When you make a mistake, you can do one of two things. You can ignore it - deny it and convince yourself it wasn't a mistake. This way, you'll keep making the same mistake over and over. Or, you can admit your mistakes, learn from them and have the courage to test yourself again in competition. This way is more risky, but also more rewarding.

Admitting you have a weakness and not working on it is just as unproductive as hiding your mistakes. You won't improve either way. You'll continue to work on what you like to do, which is what you're the best at. The result is your strengths will get stronger, while your weaknesses will get weaker. You'll never reach your full potential this way.

You may be able to get by in the short run on your raw talent or ability; but in the long run, you have to improve your weaknesses if you expect to win. Take tennis, for example. You may be able to slide by sometimes by hitting your forehand, when you should be hitting your backhand. But when it's set point and your opponent hits a shot deep to your backhand, what are you going to do?

I'll tell you what you're going to do - you're going to lose.

When the game is on the line, there's no substitute for skill. When your skill is perfected, you'll have no weaknesses. You won't be vulnerable; you'll be in control and ready to counter anything your opponent might throw at you.

Don't misunderstand us. We're not saying you should work on your weaknesses until they no longer restrict you. We're saying you should work on them until they're the stronger part of your game. So they become your strengths.

Take a great running back with concrete hands. He worked hard to get the softest hands in the league. Now he's the best receiver and still a great runner. What do you have? An all-pro, a future Hall of Famer. Why? Because he expanded his opportunities and didn't settle for less than he could be.

This holds true for athletes in all sports: The pitcher who can't field; the golfer who drives shots 250 yards down the middle, but can't putt; the basketball player who goes to the boards like Doctor J., but can't make a foul shot; the tennis player who has great ground strokes, but is afraid of coming to the net; and the wrestler who is great when he's on top but is hopeless when he needs to escape.

To get the competitive edge over your opponents, make the weakest part of your game the strongest.