

5 Lessons Learned From Olympic Athletes

Olympic Lesson #1: Be Active, Every Day

Olympic athletes follow a rigorous training schedule, and many exercise multiple times per day. The consistency and time devoted to the workouts really pay off in the competition. In fact, Ted Ligety, who won a gold medal in the giant slalom this year, trains for 5-6 hours a day. And that's just in the off season!

Can you implement a similar program on a smaller scale? You certainly don't need to train for upwards of 6 hours a day, but can you set a workout schedule that offers consistency every day? Make a real commitment to exercise consistently!

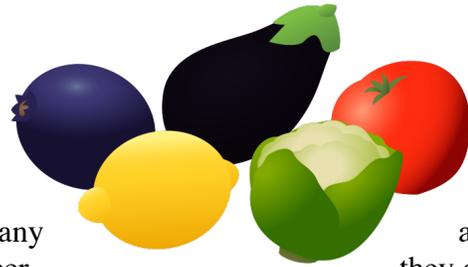
Olympic Lesson #2: Get Back Up

The injury and tragedy comeback stories in the Olympics are sure to inspire, so make sure to take those lessons to heart. Follow the lead of these amazing athletes, at whatever scale matters to you. If you have a bad day, miss a workout, or fail to stick to your program, acknowledge the frustration and then find a way to get back up and keep going.

Don't give up!

Did Stephan Groothuis give up as he injured his Achilles tendon and fought depression? No, and he went on to win a gold medal in men's speed skating (1,000 meter) in Sochi 2014!

Let these athletes inspire you. If something goes wrong in your training plans, don't let it derail you for long. Fight through the adversity and keep trying your best.



Olympic Lesson #3: Fuel Right

You won't find Olympic athletes eating a steady diet of foods laden with sodium, saturated fat, added sugars, etc. All the hard work they do requires just the right fuel, which in turn means that most Olympians eat healthfully, all day, every day. Their plans definitely don't include skipping meals regularly or avoiding the nutrients they need.

Follow the lead of these amazing athletes and find the right fuel for your life. Look for options that are nutrient-dense and free of empty calories. Talk with a dietitian about finding an eating plan that works for you.

Olympic Lesson #4: Sleep

Do you think athletes training for and competing in the Olympics let themselves run low on sleep? Absolutely not. According to that same *Forbes* article, "if you want to train like an Olympian, be prepared to go to bed at the same time as the kids. Athletes aiming for the games need to sleep anywhere from eight to 10 hours a night, often followed by a 30- to 90-minute siesta, says [Terrence] Mahon [the head coach for Team Running USA]. Resting is crucial because it gives the body a chance to rebuild tissue and muscle that's been broken down during training."

Olympic Lesson #5: Go for the Gold!

Even if a medal isn't in your future, keep your eyes on the prize. Set a goal for yourself and strive to reach it. Make reminders for those times when you need a pick-me-up and do what it takes to keep your goals in view.

Remember, the ultimate prize for a healthful lifestyle isn't a gold medal or a pile of cash, it's something even greater. Your health.