

Effort

What is Effort?

Effort is using physical and mental energy to do something. Some things require **mental effort** like taking an exam in school or concentrating for a long period of time while juggling. Other activities demand **physical effort** like running sprints during training. Often a person needs to give a lot of **initial effort** right at the beginning of an activity and also **sustained effort** all the way through an activity. Taking an SOL test can demand both initial and sustained effort. A full soccer match requires both mental and physical effort as well as initial and sustained effort.

Understanding Effort:

Effort provides the energy for the hard work that you do to learn and develop new skills. **Nothing is more important to learning and acquiring skills than effort.** Many studies have been done on elite level athletes, chess players, musicians, mathematicians, etc. to learn how they became so successful. In every case the research indicates that they weren't born with special or natural talent. They master skills through years and years of deliberate practice and reach the highest levels of expert performance, usually after a minimum of 10 years or approximately 10,000 hours. Through effort you can learn all sorts of new soccer skills.

Connection to Soccer:

Athletes use effort for almost every aspect of playing sports well, from learning new skills and tactics to pushing their minds and bodies to the limit in training and matches. The key to learning new skills is in the understanding of how skills are developed.

- Great soccer players have a growth mindset. They understand that skills are developed through effort and hard work over time.
- Great soccer players love a new challenge. They thrive off of learning new skills and even invent new moves such as the Maradona and the Cruyff.
- Great soccer players give 100% physical and mental effort to *everything* they do. Michael Jordan was known to push his teammates to the limits in practice every day; challenging them to work harder and to be better.
- Great soccer players view set-backs and failure as learning experiences and use them to get better.
- Great soccer players are willing to struggle through the stages of learning so that skills becomes automatic.
- Great soccer players are just as strong mentally as they are physically!

How to Develop Effort:

One simple way to improve effort is to **develop a habit of giving your best** in all you do, every time you step onto a soccer field or Futsal court.

- Great soccer players make it a habit to give 100% in every practice and match.
- Great soccer players self-evaluate their effort after practice or a match and give themselves a rating.
- Great soccer players focus more on their effort than on the outcome.

Giving every ounce of energy you have requires tremendous willpower. The fuel for willpower is glucose. Studies have shown that willpower increases with the proper nutrition and sleep and decreases when you are hungry, don't get the proper nutrition and when you are tired.

To improve willpower and effort:

- Eat a balanced diet with lots of fruits, vegetables and complex carbohydrates.
- Eat a healthy snack before training and matches to provide the fuel needed for mental and physical effort.
- Sleep 8 hours or more each night.

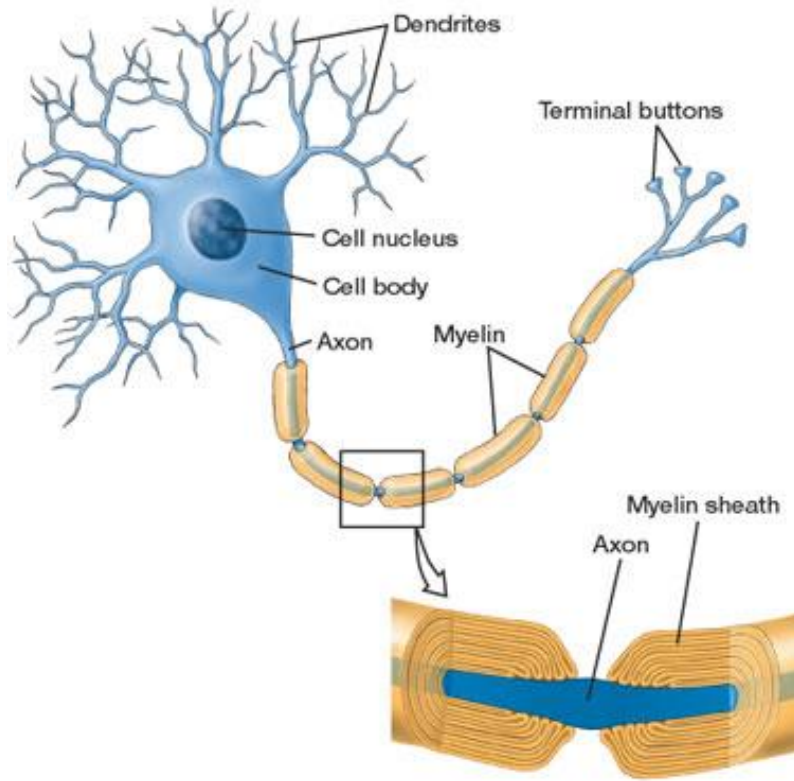
Did You Know?

All skill and talent is developed through lots of hard work, effort and determination. In fact, every human skill is created by chains of nerve fibers called axons that carry electrical impulses to muscles and other areas of the brain. The way that you develop skill is through the process of practicing and failing over and over again. In doing so a neural insulator called myelin actually begins wrapping around the nerve fiber like a form of insulation making the signal stronger and faster. To develop skill you need to build more myelin. Daniel Coyle, author of *The Talent Code* puts it this way: ***“Practice makes myelin and myelin makes perfect.”***

To learn more about myelin search on YouTube for:

Myelin Development in the Brain ABC Nightline 09/30/09

Diagram of Myelin wrapping around the axons



Century-old motto of the Blackburn Rovers of the EPL



“Skill and Hard Work”