

Determination

What is Determination?

Determination starts with making up your mind about something; a decision. It also can be the quality of being persistent. It's the drive that keeps you going even when things are tough and you struggle. Researcher Angela Duckworth calls this type of determination, grit, which she defines as passion and perseverance for long term goals.

Understanding Determination:

Once the decision has been made and there's a commitment to the decision, then what lies ahead is the hard work. Determination is what keeps you going despite set-backs and failures. It's what helps you to finish what you start. Showing determination is all about the struggle involved with learning and mastering new skills so that you can face even bigger challenges.

What are some things that you are determined to do or achieve?

Connection to Soccer:

Determination is one of the most important skills that an athlete can possess. Determination is a necessity for skill development and it's the mental frame of mind necessary to be successful in competition. When you really think about it, soccer is a game of cooperation vs. opposition. Each team is working together to try and beat the other team. The team that is the most determined usually wins the battle. All coaches know that at times they will face teams with more physical talent; however, they hope they never face a team that is more determined to win!

- Great soccer players are just as determined when they are experiencing failure as they are when things are going well.
- Great soccer players show determination by practicing alone for hours with focus.
- Great soccer players work tirelessly to accomplish their goals.
- Great soccer players have the endurance and stamina to finish whatever they start.

How to Develop Determination

Determination is a mental skill; a mental tool in the tool box. The key to developing determination is this – **if at first you don't succeed, try and try again.**

1. Set a small Goal

Pick a skill that is just beyond your current ability. Work at accomplishing this small goal and track your progress. This is known as the “Progress Principle” and it has a positive influence on self-motivation.

2. Small Victories Are Key

Small victories lead to big victories. Setting and accomplishing smaller goals builds self-confidence and a pattern of winning due to effort.

3. Use Self-Control Strategies

Use the strategies learned in self-control section to handle distractions and temptations.

4. Positive Self-Talk

Remind yourself that “Practice makes myelin and myelin makes perfect.” Every rep that is done with focus and effort is wrapping one more layer of myelin around the nerve fibers that control skill, which is getting you one step closer to your goal.

5. Don’t Quit!

Whatever you do, don’t stop! Every time you practice, with every rep, you’re one step closer to mastering a skill or accomplishing a goal. If you are really struggling to learn a new skill, break it down part by part and focus on just one aspect of the skill at a time. Another strategy is to practice the skill slower than you normally would.

Did You Know?

Researcher Angela Duckworth of the University of Pennsylvania has been studying what makes people successful for the last decade. For years it was generally accepted that IQ was the best (most reliable) predictor of success. But Dr. Duckworth found something else to be even better at predicting success than IQ. In her research she found that if someone had a combination of positive character strengths that she refers to as “Grit” that is actually a better predictor of success than IQ. She defines grit as passion and perseverance for long-term goals. Her research is now being used by the US Military Academy at West Point and by the KIPP Public Charter Schools (Knowledge is Power Program). Determination is definitely an important part of having grit!