

The Nine Cs

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Nine characteristics of mental toughness. They are a set of behaviors and beliefs about yourself, your work, your [sport](#), and how you interact. A person who is mentally tough looks at competition as a challenge to rise up to rather than a threat to back down from. Like physical skills, mental toughness can be learned through quality instruction and practice.

1. **CHARACTER.** Value of and the forging of strength, reputation, respect, admiration and the long lasting happiness that comes from sacrifice, pains and effort. The pleasure humans take from rising above the pull of self-desires, were we gain the acceptance and affection of others.
2. **CONSCIENCE.** Our capacity to judge ourselves in moral terms and to conform to those standards and values that we make a part of our inner being, is also motivated by good feelings such as pride (in our fulfillment of goodness), compassion, empathy, love, and identification (seeing ourselves in others, thereby imagining how our actions would feel if directed onto us).
3. **COMPETITIVE.** A competitor will find a way to win. Competitors take bad breaks and use them to drive themselves just that much harder. Quitters take bad breaks and use them as reasons to give up.
4. **CONFIDENT.** Confident [athletes](#) have a can-do attitude, a belief they can handle whatever comes their way. They almost never fall victim to self-defeating thoughts.
5. **CONTROL.** Successful athletes are able to control their emotions and behavior. They focus on what they can control and do not allow things that are out of their control to affect them. The hallmark of mentally tough athletes is the ability to maintain poise, concentration and emotional control under the greatest pressure and the most challenging situations.
6. **COMMITTED.** Mentally tough athletes focus their time and energy on their goals and dreams. They are self-directed and highly motivated.
7. **COMPOSURE.** Mentally tough athletes know how to stay focused and deal with adversity. How a player manages their emotions can determine whether they win or lose. A mentally tough player will say to himself, OK, if I've got to beat the other guy and the pins too, then fine – I'll do that.
8. **COURAGE.** A mentally tough athlete must be willing to take a risk. That's what peak performers do. As the philosopher said, it takes courage to grow up and to achieve your full potential.
9. **CONSISTENCY.** Mentally tough athletes possess an inner strength. They often play their best when they're feeling their worst. They don't make excuses.

Competition is won or lost on the six-inch playing field between the ears. Practice the nine C's of mental toughness. Learn to love the competition.