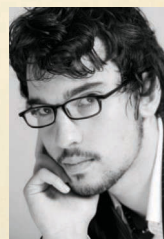


THE INNER CRITIC

SHUT IT!

“
**CHALLENGE
 THE INNER
 VOICE'S LOGIC
 AND IT WILL
 EVAPORATE**
 ”

You know that voice, the one in your head saying you're not good enough. We all have an 'inner critic', but let it get too loud and it can harm your health. *Sport* spoke to sport psychologist Sam Kotadia, managing director of Mindsport, to get his advice on silencing the critics...



WHO IS YOUR INNER CRITIC?

➔ **THE VOICE THAT DETERS YOU FROM CERTAIN BEHAVIOURS BY FEEDING YOUR MIND WITH NEGATIVITY AND CYNICISM**

- Common examples include attacks on your intelligence, your physical attractiveness and your ability to form long-lasting relationships.
- Some people have a louder and more convincing inner critic than others.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

➔ **YOUR INNER CRITIC'S COMMENTS HAVE AN INHIBITING IMPACT ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR BY RESTRICTING YOUR CHOICES...**

- ... but they can also keep you safe. Like a protective parent, being overly critical can correct a child's behaviour so that society does not shun it.
- If allowed to grow out of proportion, your inner critic can become damaging.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH IT?

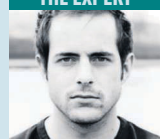
➔ **AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO CONTROL THE PATHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF YOUR INNER CRITIC IS TO QUESTION THE RATIONALITY OF THE STATEMENTS IT MAKES**

- You should put the inner critic on trial by asking a series of questions that examine the strength of the critic's comments.
- For example, the negative voice says "I am unattractive" (bad-hair day or feeling the effects of last night's six pints, for example). Firstly, ask how you know that you are unattractive. Secondly, ask if there is a possibility you could just be wrong.
- Sometimes, all it takes to destroy a limiting belief is to open up to the possibility that you could be wrong.
- The moment you accept the viability of alternative explanations to the negative comments, your focus is shifted in another, more positive direction. This, obviously, is a good thing.

SHOULD I GO SPINNING WITH MY GIRL?

I've started going to the gym with my girlfriend, but now she wants me to join her in a spinning class. Can I really get any benefit out of it, and will I be the only bloke?

"Spinning is fantastic cardiovascular exercise – it will boost your fitness levels, which will assist with your weight training and other gym activities.



THE EXPERT

SIMON LOVELL

The cycling workout is open to all abilities, and you'll notice good development within a few weeks, as well as some serious power in those legs – no more lower-body twiglets! Both sexes take part, so you won't be in a room of sweaty women. There's a great social side to spinning, too, so you can make loads of new gym buddies."

Simon Lovell is a personal trainer – see www.theheatfitness.co.uk

HOW MANY COFFEES IS TOO MANY COFFEES?

Can you give me a definitive answer to the caffeine question? How many cups of tea and/or coffee per day should I have?

"Moderate amounts of caffeine – two to three cups of brewed coffee or four to six cups of tea a day – are not harmful. But stimulants like caffeine, alcohol and cigarettes all deplete energy. The average amount of caffeine in a 235ml cup of tea is 40mg, but the longer it's brewed the more caffeine it contains. Coffee supplies 75-100mg per cup. Heavy daily caffeine use – four to seven cups of coffee – can cause health problems and even abnormal heart rhythms."

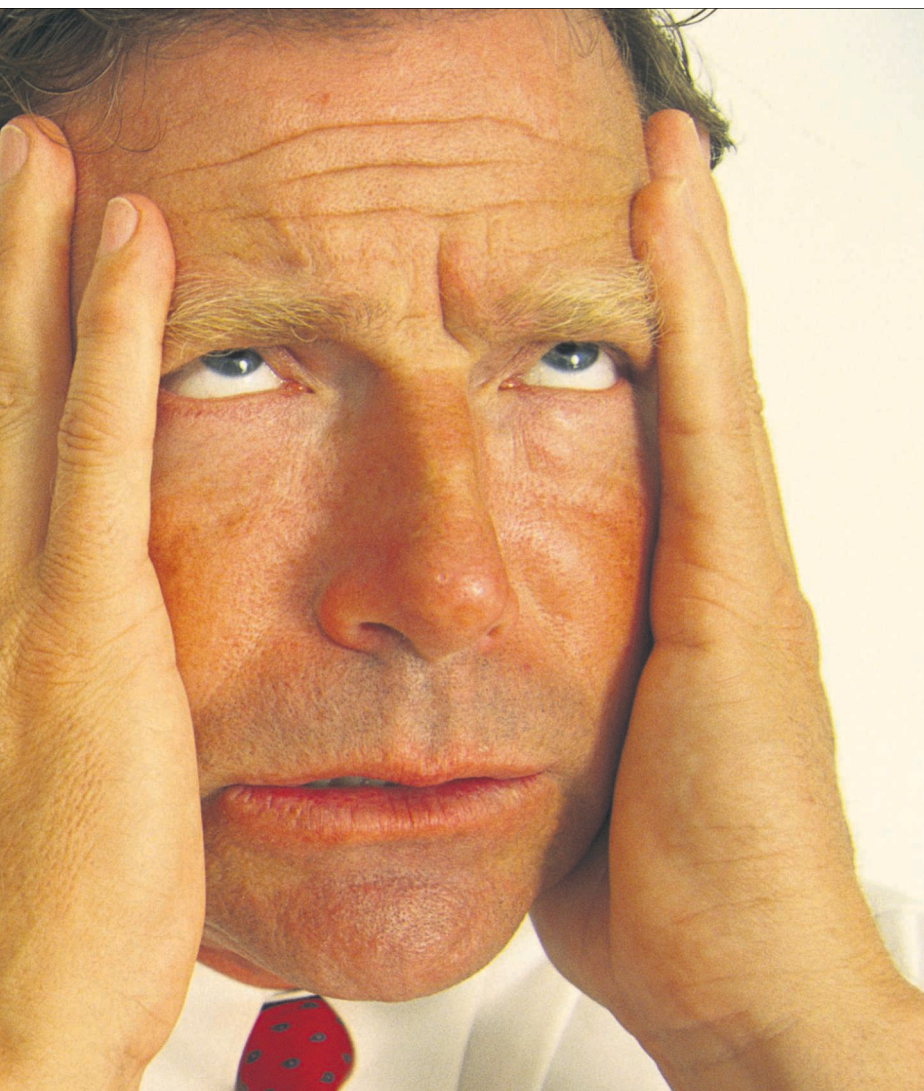


THE EXPERT

HENRIETTA BAILEY


Henrietta Bailey is a nutritionist – see www.puresportsmed.com

Sport has assembled a crack team of experts in the fields of fitness, nutrition and general wellbeing to answer all your questions. Send your questions in to sarah.shephard@myfreesport.co.uk...



WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

➔ OVERCOMING YOUR INNER CRITIC IS NECESSARY TO IMPROVING THE NEGATIVE FEELINGS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM

- Having low self-esteem is common in today's society – even those who appear to be full of confidence can still suffer from issues.
- Silencing your inner critic is possible, but it requires determined practice and, in some cases, support from others to turn negative thoughts into positive ones.
- Challenge the logic behind your inner critic's comments and the voice will evaporate. Only then will you win the battle. 

SARAH SHEPHARD

Sam Kotadia is managing director of MindSport Ltd. For more details, see www.mindsportlive.com

MY RUNS ARE PLAGUED BY STITCH AND CRAMPS

I got into running about two months ago, but I always get stitch or cramp about two miles into my runs. I have tried drinking more and stretching. Any advice?

"For a stitch, too much fluid or the wrong food beforehand can be the cause. Try different warm-ups, fluid and food types. Cramps are usually associated with a depletion of body minerals – especially sodium, potassium and magnesium. If the cramps occur at other times, try magnesium phosphate tablets. Place a carbohydrate emphasis on your intake pre-training, too. Start slower and see if your energy levels have more time to adjust to the exercise."

THE EXPERT



STEVE NANCE

Steve Nance, director of performance, Pure Sports Medicine – www.puresportsmed.com

ADVERTISING FEATURE

WAKE UP NATURALLY



➔ Dark mornings getting the better of you? Do you repeatedly hit the snooze button before you can face getting up each day? Well, now you can get rid of your noisy alarm and rise just the way nature intended, thanks to the new Wake-up Light from Philips.

From half an hour before you wake up, the Wake-up Light emits light that gradually rises to your chosen intensity, simulating the rising sun in your bedroom and gently preparing your body to wake up naturally.

Research proves that dawn simulation improves subjective measures of energy, mood, productivity and quality of sleep. It's also well documented that light can have a profound effect on our general wellbeing – that's why we are normally more energetic, productive and happy on bright, sunny days.

It seems odd, then, that the majority of us use intrusive sound to wake us up, whether the shrieking of an alarm or a breakfast show on radio. Philips consumer research shows that 87 per cent of us regularly hit snooze to grab an extra bit of sleep. But in trials, only 20 per cent of Philips Wake-up Light users continued to use the snooze.

Research shows that light stimulates the senses, giving you more energy and helping you feel less lethargic. As the light falls on your eyes, a message is sent to your brain that positively affects the production of cortisol, the energy hormone. This means that, at your required wake-up time, your hormones are better balanced and you'll feel more energetic. So make that change today, and choose light to wake up naturally.

The Philips Wake-up Light is available from Argos and Boots, RRP £100



PHILIPS

For more information, go to www.philips.co.uk/wakeuplight