Win at Home

Take-home guide: Mind, Body, and Energy habits for young athletes

WHY YOU'RE HERE

The athletes who lasted had people around them.

We've worked with some of the best athletes in the world. What they had in common was the people around them. Winning at home gives your kids the best chance to win at school, in sport, and in life.

Brian Alexander, CMPC

Olympic water polo path. Mental performance work through Tokyo and Paris. Muirlands parent.

Dr. Matt Kritz, PhD

25+ years in elite sport on three continents. Four Olympic Games. Helped athletes win 40+ medals across 30+ sports.

THE BIG IDEA

Challenge plus support.

Young athletes grow with the right balance of both, and parents control most of the support. Mind, Body, and Energy are three places you can set that balance at home.

Ask yourself: are you more of a challenger or a supporter at home?

CHALLENGE ↑

Unrelenting
High challenge, low support. Kids get anxious or stop enjoying the sport.



Facilitative
High challenge, high support, set to the child's age and moment. Aim here.



Stagnant
Low challenge, low support.



Comfortable
Low challenge, high support. Little confidence or resilience gets built.



SUPPORT →

MIND

Awareness is the practice. Two skills help.

Awareness is attention to what is around us and inside us. It grows through experience in four areas: mental, physical, technical, and tactical.

Breathing regulates the nervous system, and the thinking mind follows.
Try it together in the Ready First app.

Self-talk works best when it's planned.
Motivational: simple statements that drive effort from within. **Instructional:** one to three word cues that point to what matters now.

Four things you can shape at home

Help them find what they did right
Confidence grows from effort, preparation, and small wins. Try "I loved how you kept working."

Change the car ride
Skip the instant analysis. Ask “What was fun today?” and save the debrief for when they bring it up.

Set a phone habit
Comparison and highlight reels wear kids down. Charge phones outside bedrooms and keep a few phone-free windows each day.

Track their enthusiasm day by day
Sport is where kids practice mistakes and bouncing back. Know when to bring in a counselor or coach.

THIS WEEK

One question, one phone habit, one way to praise effort.

BODY

Injuries occur when demand exceeds capacity.

Demand is what a sprint, a jump, or a long practice asks of the body. Capacity is what muscle, tendon, ligament, and bone can handle. Injuries come slowly (chronic) or in one moment (acute).



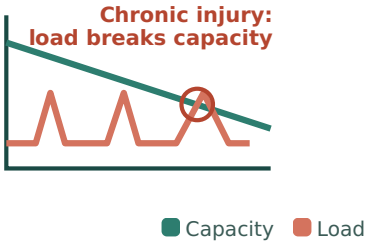
CHRONIC INJURY

Low demand, repeated with poor form.

Form drifts, so each stride loads the body a little unevenly and capacity wears down.

Poor posture **Inconsistent ground contact**

Poor hip extension





ACUTE INJURY

One landing, load going in the wrong direction.

The poor landing

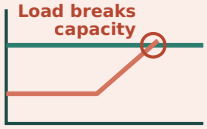
Forward on toes

Upright trunk leaning back

Knees collapse inward



The knee collapses inward and the ACL cannot hold the load.



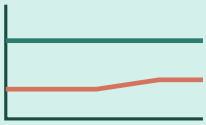
The better landing

Trunk forward **Hips back**

Strong, stable ground contact



Same jump. The big muscles share the load.



BODY AT HOME General education, not medical advice.

Build capacity. Respect demand.

Pain is a signal. It's not always a stop sign.

Soreness is general and fades. Sharp, one-spot pain, or pain that changes how they move, deserves a professional look. Pushing through it is not the answer either.

RICE is out. Think PEACE & LOVE.

First days: PEACE. Protect it, Elevate, Avoid anti-inflammatories, Compress, Educate.

Then: LOVE. Load it early, stay Optimistic, get pain-free cardio, and Exercise back to strength.



The point of training is capacity.

Training builds the capacity of the soft tissue so the load never reaches it. The gap is the margin of safety.



ENERGY

There are no bad foods. They have different powers.



Foods just have different powers. Think of them as fun, good, and great for the job they do.

Kindling: fun foods

Sweets, sugary drinks, highly processed snacks. Quick energy that burns off fast. Fun, and they have their place.

Burns out fast

Logs: good and great foods

Whole grains, fruit, vegetables, protein, healthy fats. Slower to burn, steady for hours.

Keeps burning

A quick burst has its place, like right before a game. Make sure the logs show up the rest of the day.

ENERGY AT HOME

Three daily habits fuel the body.

Sleep

The biggest performance lever you control.

Same bedtime every night, set for your child's age and schedule.



Daylight in the eyes first thing, before any screen light.



Nutrition

Fuel before and after training. Aim for good enough habits, not a perfect meal plan.

Recovery

Hydration and rest, so kids show up ready instead of run down.



Hydration: water through the day, not just at practice.



Rest: downtime and easy days after hard days.

THIS WEEK

One sleep target, one shared meal, one recovery habit.

THE HOME PLAYBOOK

Five things to start tonight.



1. **Change the car-ride question**
   "What did you enjoy today?"

2. **Teach a healthy relationship with phones**
   Phones give kids access, safety, and a way to escape at times. It becomes a problem when they can't function without one and it crowds out the habits that keep them ready.

3. **Praise effort and process**
   Name the behavior you saw, not just the score.

4. **Protect sleep and get morning light**
   Kids need 8 or more hours, and younger kids need more. Keep the same bedtime and wake time, even on weekends. Morning sunlight in the eyes first thing builds energy for the day and makes bedtime easier.

5. **Wait before the big conversation**
   Give it 24 hours after a tough game.

WHERE READY FIRST FITS

You don't have to figure it all out alone.

Ready First is a support system for the adults around a young athlete. Mind, Body, and Energy come together as one daily picture, and your child moves from Rebuilding to Rising to Ready.



Know how they are doing. Help them get ready. Winning at home gives them the best chance to win outside it.

Built on what works for high performers. Made for all ages. COPPA-compliant. Ad-free. Parent-controlled.

TAKE IT HOME

Scan to get Ready First.

Put this guide to work at home every day.

Download the Ready First app now.

