

Physical and Mental Preparation for a session

Intro

When I started my research on this topic I came across one philosophy for running which said,

“Your mind, not your body, gets the final say in determining how fast you run in races.” Matt Fitzgerald.

This really made me think about preparing for a session of horse competing or even a lesson.

Mental Fitness

Is it easy to become physically fit ? – probably. Unless you are dealing with injuries we all really have the same chances to be physically fit !

So what separates each individual ? – in my view its our mental state / capacity !

The mentality of training is one thing but it doesn't stop there. The mentality of competing is also difficult.

We have to 'want' otherwise a lesson is useless. We must 'want to learn'. If we enter a lesson half-heartedly we will not gain optimally from it, we will only gain what we put into it !

In competing we must want to be the best we can we must 'want to thrive' to be the best.

However, what about the in-between ? In between the lesson and the actual competing ! This is probably the most important area for mental fitness. The times when we are alone and the doubts crop in about that particular jump or do we steel ourselves that we must go ahead.

I recently had a pupil who wanted to do cross country. She had never been to a cross country show so we had a lesson first. She was nervous we did a few jumps but she sought to quit whilst she was ahead. Or shall we put it the mentality of self security kicked in. Three weeks later however she came back and wanted another lesson at cross country. She admitted she was frightened of the gated jump but there was something different.

Her mental state was entirely different to the first time. On questioning her she admitted that she decided to go for it, that this would not beat her and then the night before her only thoughts were that she 'would do this'. She likened it to a black run skiing that she once fell on and she was determined that one day she would do it in one.

The difference in this pupil between the first cross country session and the second was the mental training she had put in, instead of just turning up !

I know this is only talking about a lesson but it is no difference to competing. To her this lesson was as important as competing.