



# ***Race Psychology – The Mind Game***

Cognitive Fitness

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## Background and Purpose of this Presentation

This presentation was used on the 2017 Spine Race Training Weekend at Hebden Hay, (CP1), as part of the preparation for the 2018 January Spine Race.

It's been designed to be accessed & used by those Ultra runners who ran the 76km training run over the weekend, and also by the 'Spinners' and 'Challengers' who couldn't make the training – especially less experienced Ultra runners – The Spine isn't like any other Ultra race ..... and you need to be physically & mentally prepared for it.





## ***Dr Fiona Beddoes-Jones***

### ***Race Psychologist***

We have a duty of care to you, the competitors, and also to the volunteers who generously support us. Most often, if you want or need to speak to someone about something that's on your mind, the supportive ear of a friend, another competitor or one of the support crew will be enough. If it isn't, come and find me. That's what I'm here for.



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## *Session Outline*

- Cognitive Fitness - thinking in the right way at the right time
- 3 kinds of people who finish
- 3 kinds of people who DNF
- Cognitive Impairment
- What have you learnt?
- The Mind Game: Before, During and After the race
- Suggestions and support



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flexibility, agility, strength

# What is Cognitive Fitness?

*“Thinking in the right ways  
at the right time ....”*

## Flexibility



### Different Strategies

- Practical / Theoretical
- Positive / Negative
- Collaborative / Competitive
- Strategic / Detail
- Creative / Logical
- Different Timeframes
- ‘Through other people’s eyes’

## Agility



### Speed of Response

- Planning
- Problem Solving
- Contingencies
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Alternative Scenarios
- State Management

## Strength



### Courage

- Mental Toughness
- Resilience
- Vulnerability
- Attitude
- Generosity of Spirit
- Acceptance
- Forgiveness

*Explanations of the terminology, and the ‘thinking behind the thinking’ for this slide can be found in the posts on the Cognitive Fitness blog (which you can access via the website below).*

*“Courage is the ladder  
on which all other virtues mount”  
Clare Boothe Luce*

*For The Spine Race 2017  
Hebden Hay Training, Oct 2016*

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*Dr Fiona Beddoes-Jones*  
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## ***Cognitive Impairment***

- A failure to understand / interpret the Mind/Body link
- Going quiet / change of personality
- Lose sense of humour
- Stop thinking straight
- Stop making connections
- Stop thinking forward / making contingency plans
- Start making 'silly' mistakes
- Running a less than helpful mental script
  
- The mind and body learn through experience





## *Steve Hayes*

2014 Winner of the Cognitive Fitness Award

• ‘Sorted Mindset’ – see Stu Westfield’s presentation  
(It’s at the CENTRE of the Skills Set wheel)

- Flexible and agile thinking
- Assistance and support to others
- Sense of humour
- Resilience



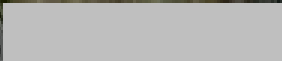
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## ***Tom Jones***

2015 Winner of the Cognitive Fitness Award

- Flexibility, State Management,
- Generosity of Spirit
  
- Assistance and support to others
- Sense of humour
- Resilience







## **Ryan Wood**

2016 Winner of the Cognitive Fitness Award

- Assistance and support to others
- Sense of humour
- Resilience
- General attitude throughout race



## *3 Types of People who Finish*

1. Competitive, driven, focused, independent. They 'Race'.

2. Laid back, relaxed, self-sufficient, stable, they like their own company, they enjoy all weathers and night running (they often stride). They enjoy the whole event.

3. Sociable, tend to buddy up or walk in a team (though they don't rely on others), will 'move on' to join or form another group easily. Also self-sufficient. They tend to have more highs and lows than the other 2 types.





## ***3 Types of People who DNF***

1. Under-estimate the terrain. Over-estimate themselves.
2. People who are not self-sufficient (either emotionally or physically re. their Skills Set) and 'need' other people.
3. People who are not 'cognitively fit'. E.g. They: don't 'think forward'; 'beat themselves up' if they make an error; make more errors than more experienced people; have an 'unstable' personality when stressed or tired; doggedly continue when they need to change strategy.





## After yesterday's training loop and the experience of night time micro navigation, answer the following:

(writing your answers down is useful, as you may find your answers change over time)

1. What have you learnt?
2. What are you going to do differently now in your preparation for the Spine Race itself?
3. What are your Top 3 Tips TO YOURSELF?





## Strategies for Success ...

Constantly monitor your cognitive & emotional states (thoughts & feelings) as well as your physical one.

Develop a self-monitoring feedback loop so you can address any issues before they become critical or dangerous, just as you would for hydration, nutrition, personal admin. or hypothermia.

A spiral of negative thinking can catch you out - just like hypothermia, hunger or dehydration ..... recognise the signs in yourself & catch it early so you can address it.

**Practise the mental stuff in the same way that you practise the physical stuff – proactively.**



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## Strategies for Success ...

Surround yourself with positive people who are as committed to your success as you are (or more so!)

If you choose to have support, they need to be self-sufficient & self-reliant, and *totally* supportive

Or, you will end up having to 'manage' them as well as yourself. (e.g. if they are tired, they could become negative & you can't afford to prop them up!)

Be very careful about phoning home, phoning friends, checking Facebook!! **Stay focused on the task at hand**



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## Strategies for Success ... Transitions through CPs

Check Points are busy, noisy, chaotic places. They are lit 24/7. They are usually warmer and drier than being outside and there will be hot food and a brew. BUT, they can eat up your time if you're not careful.

### The 'Worst' I have seen

Hebden Hay, CP1, all ready to go and then faffing around upstairs for 3 'extra' hours

### The 'Best' I have seen

Hebden Hay, CP1, 10 minutes .....

**Have a plan for transitioning through each one.**



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## Strategies for Success ...

What are your sleeping and waking strategies? You need to practise these too.

**If you don't rest optimally, everything is compromised.**

e.g. use a good sleep mask, earplugs or music system. Even more critical for checkpoints which are busy, noisy and light. Wear them at home so they feel 'normal' to you. Have an eye mask with a nose, - black satin & lace saying 'sexy' won't do the job!

Music is an 'anchor' and a 'hypnotic command' – if you use a particular track or loop & practise at home you will be able to fall asleep quickly & easily.

Practise waking up. A first thought such as *Wake Refreshed* can help – Your body will do as you tell it.



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## ***The Mind Game:***

### ***Before the Race***

- Practice! Get the right kit and use it – it will give you confidence
- Practice your strategies. You need to be able to self-manage
- Train your brain - the brain will do what you tell it to
- Find your ‘best mental state’ and be in that zone for the start
- Label ALL of your kit with your name and number!

### ***During the Race***

- See the Cognitive Fitness page!
- Good quality thinking. Flexibility, Agility, Strength
- Enjoy yourself; it’s YOUR race

### ***After the Race***

- Manage your state whether you finish or not
- Find a way of pressing your ‘Reset’ button
- Recover mentally as well as physically





## Post Training Support

There is always support for you if you need it

- 1.You can contact the support team at any time via the Spine website or its Facebook page
- 2.Any 'cognitive fitness' / personal coaching support questions via the same routes, or directly to me on [fiona.bj@cognitivefitness.co.uk](mailto:fiona.bj@cognitivefitness.co.uk) . There is no charge for pre & post race psychological support from me, provided that you call me!
- 3.There is more information about cognitive fitness on the Cognitive Fitness Blog, accessed via my website

**Good Luck!**



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flexibility, agility, strength

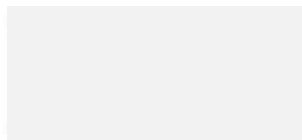
## A Final Thought .....

*If:*

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**

*are represented as:*

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21  
22 23 24 25 26**

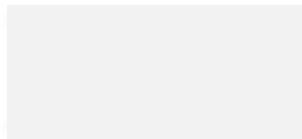




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## K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E

11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = **96%**

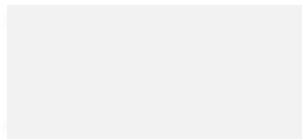




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## H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K

8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = **98%**

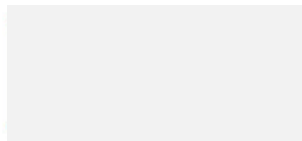




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## A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E

$$1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = \mathbf{100\%}$$



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*Enjoy yourself  
and  
Make your own luck*

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*The Spine Race 2017  
October 2016*

*Hebden Bridge Training,  
Cognitive Fitness Consultancy*