



GOLDMINDS

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IT'S OK TO BE NERVOUS

Master the nervousness of the moment—never allow the nervousness of the moment to master you.

Do you get nervous? Here's the good news: welcome to the human race...*everyone* gets nervous!

Movie stars, rock stars, politicians, comedians, world-famous celebrities, professional athletes and, yes, even Olympic and world-champion swimmers get nervous.

The trick is not to fear *fear*.

Feeling nervous is normal, natural and necessary.

Those weird feelings and funny sensations you're experiencing is your body telling you: *"Hey, wake up! It's time for us to go into action and do something amazing. Let's get that blood flowing, a bit of adrenaline moving, and let's get ready to go, go, go."*

Nerves are nice, but only if you learn how to manage them—or, more specifically—if you learn to manage the way nervousness can make you feel.

Nervousness is a little like the "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" fairy tale:

- **Not enough** nervousness, and you're likely to feel slow, flat and tired.

- **Too much** nervousness, and you're jumping around, excited and way too stimulated.

- But get it **"just right,"** and you'll be ready to fly—fast and fantastic.

THREE PRACTICAL EXERCISES TO TURN NERVES INTO REAL NERVE!

1. "What If"

The "What If" exercise is a great way to eliminate many of the fears you have about your racing.



[PHOTO BY MIKE ARON]

First, write down a list of all the things you're worried about: a list of all the fears you have about racing and competing. Some examples might include:

- "What if I finish last?"
- "What if I slip on the blocks?"
- "What if I don't do a PR?"
- "What if I let down my team?"
- "What if I break in the relay changeover?"

These are all perfectly normal and natural fears. However, there are ways to overcome each of them.

Without doubt, the single most effective way to eliminate stress is to do things when you know you need to do them. This means, of course, training to your full potential—every session, every day.

However, even if you give everything you've got to everything you do, there's no guarantee you'll completely eliminate all of your fears and anxieties.