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## Nervousness Is Energy

### Mind Training Tips for Swimmers - Sports Psychology Tips for Swimmers

From [Craig Townsend](#), for About.com

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Ian Thorpe, Inge DeBruijn and Lenny Krayzelburg all won gold medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics - which in some respects is not surprising as they were considered the 'swimmers to beat' in their particular events. However, as experienced as these swimmers are, they all admitted battling with severe bouts of nervousness - even with THEIR levels of inner-belief!

Ian Thorpe said afterwards that he hadn't expected to feel any nervousness at all - but when he came out from the marshalling area and the huge crowd began cheering for him, he felt the emotion rise up from inside of him, which is exactly the feeling many competitors experience in times of great stress or nervousness. Despite this, he won the 400m freestyle in world record time, and backed up an hour later to claim another world record in the 4x100m relay. Inge DeBruijn revealed that she used to battle severe bouts of nervousness to compete at the highest level, but said (a day before her race) that she was confident and ready to go.

As a gold medal at the Olympics was her main goal, plus the fact that she had never swum at an Olympics before, you can almost be sure that when she walked out to the blocks for her first ever Olympic final, she would have experienced the same sort of nerves Ian Thorpe did in the 400m freestyle. Yet she won the 100m butterfly in world record time (her 9th world record for the year). Lenny Krayzelburg is probably the closest thing we can imagine to a machine when it comes to performing in the pool, his confidence and consistency are legendary - yet even he said that he felt extremely nervous before the final race. Despite a close tussle with Josh Watson, he came out on top as usual - that is what true champions do.

When you feel nervous next time you're about to swim a race, remember these two important things. First of all, everyone else is feeling exactly the same way. It's much more comforting to know that you are not the only one going through this! If even these great champions can feel the nerves of us 'mere mortals', then it means that everyone must go through it - it's our RESPONSE to the nervousness which is important.

You see (and this is the second thing to remember) nervousness is simply energy - nervous energy, which can be used and channeled into your performance! That's what the champions do, they use it to their advantage, whereas most others stress out about being nervous and allow it to destroy them. So actually, if a swimmer is NOT nervous at all, they may not have the power and energy available to them that a nervous swimmer possesses!

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Being a little nervous is an advantage, not a disadvantage. This is what nervousness is for - to give you energy. Remember this in your next big race - channel the nerves into your swim, and feel your body unleash the incredible power it has been storing up for the race. Your mind will always provide what your body needs - and one of these things is nervous energy.

**The Mind controls the body, and the mind is unlimited. The best of success,**

**Craig Townsend**