



The Art and Psychology of Throwing a Line

I believe this may be the most valuable skill ever adapted by tree climbers

Written by Tiago Miranda

We all know how vital throwline is to our daily jobs. If you are a tree climber, you must surely have noticed that prioritising this specific tool has essential benefits in the long run. It enhances your ability to perceive job methodology and helps you finish them on time. It is hard to believe that such a thin string with a weight bag could determine fatigue and readiness throughout your day. I only started noticing the efficacy of throwline later on in my career. I declined to deploy this on many occasions in situations where I thought it would not be necessary.



Climber: T. Miranda 2016

Due to my lack of knowledge and practice, throwline made me uncomfortable, especially when using it in front of others. I felt intimidated by showing my throwing skills extant of my failures.

Nowadays, I realise that our psyche plays a huge role in this game.

Although patience seems to be the most appropriate weapon to fight 'thrown rejections', technique and mindset may be considered indispensable here. In this case, understanding the psychology behind the throw and bringing science into the scene may clarify a few issues that we once ignored.

First of all, we have to associate "*the action of throwing*" with specific predicaments, such as attentional focus, imagery and motivation. All of these can determine how results may unfold.



From both ends of the thread, psychologists have defined the term “*selective attention*”, which is the ability to focus one’s attention on something while ignoring competitive stimuli that might otherwise distract you.

It means the exact moment of pendulum swing with the correct line length, supported by the selected bag weight. The consistency of feeling in its motion and focusing at one point of achievement, forgotten of distance and accuracy, would never let you imagine how these attributes could result in a successful throw.

It sounds complicated, but it is easier than you think, at least in theory.

The act of visualising a performative task (**imagery**), for most athletes, works as the specific activity is already underway. Your mind surpasses that anchor point of choice before you throw.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivators might play a part in fighting your distraction back to rock-solid focus, unaware of external noises and a keenness to do it (**motivation**).

And lastly, having people around you expectantly waiting for you to perform can be hugely distracting. However, the ability to tune out and focus your attention (**attentional focus**) on the task at hand may bring this to silence.



Source: R. Tregoweth 2018

There is a new branch in psychology that plays a significant role in developing mental skills in athletes. It is called sport psychology. It is a proficiency developed by Dr Carl Diem circa 1920 that uses



ARB DEBATE

psychological knowledge and skills to provide optimal performance and well-being.

Nonetheless, sports psychology can teach you how to improve the thinking process and performance level, even occasionally in a working scenario. Industrial athletes, like most tree climbers, depend seriously on dedication and daily practices. This alone might be the way forward to get better at what we can do.

Beyond all of this, a climber's attention can be influenced by awareness of simple factors, such as weight, force, velocity and environmental noises. So, it is up to you to pack these into a small box and release it open when necessary. And that is when an excellent throwline technique comes in handy.

As my good friend Nick often says, *it is time to work the sack, mate.*



Source: N. Ames 2016