



# What women are saying about coaching needs and practices in Masters sport

(Callary & Young, 2016). *Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching*.

Dr. Callary and Dr. Young's program of research Coaching Masters Athletes has grown since 2013 to include Dr. Rathwell and a number of students in several research studies that illuminate psychosocial issues of working with a fast-growing and understudied cohort of Masters Athletes.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

We ask you to consider these tips based on what women have said, and think about whether they resonate with the way you coach. We surmise that these tips, framed in adult learning principles, and derived from data regarding MAs' preferences and needs, are also especially relevant for women MAs. They may also represent a natural way for women coaches to facilitate learning opportunities for MAs because they line up well with women's interests and motivations as athletes and coaches, as well as with taking a cooperative and caring, reciprocally committed, and respectful approach to coaching.

## TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FEMALE MA'S INTERESTS IN KNOWING WHY, HOW, AND WHAT TO LEARN:

- Explain to her why she is learning something.
- Prior to dedicated work on skills, use personal performance assessments as an 'up front' tool to elucidate what and why she needs to learn in the context of where the skills will be applied.

## TO HELP YOUR FEMALE MA FEEL LIKE SHE HAS SOME AUTONOMY IN TRAINING:

- Allow her to make her own decisions and choices with regards to training.
- Involve her in collaborative planning of her training.

## TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE WEALTH OF EXPERIENCES THAT A FEMALE MA HAS:

- Listen to comments about past experiences to inform how you set up her training and help her examine unhelpful habits and biases.
- Try not to feel impatient with the amount of time she may need to grasp various concepts, or how long it takes to see progress.

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## TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FEMALE MA'S READINESS TO LEARN:

- Consider how to accommodate her when you set up practice/competitive schedules.
- Be sensitive to demands on her life outside of sport.

## TO TAKE A PROBLEM-BASED ORIENTATION TO YOUR FEMALE MA'S LEARNING:

- Ask her about her goals and how she hopes to achieve them. (While this may seem intuitive, our research shows that coaches often neglect goal-setting with MAs.).
- Use questioning techniques in various learning situations so she is challenged to think about the task at hand, and to connect it to larger meaningful tasks in her sport.

## TO HELP YOUR FEMALE MA'S MOTIVATION TO TRAIN:

- Set up opportunities for her to experience success in practice, using criteria for success such as improved health, mastering techniques, enriching the social fabric of the club that can be interpreted in ways that are consistent with her motives for being in adult sport.
- Set up competitive activities for her during practice, emphasizing self-referenced forms of competition and encouraging her to better or "beat" her previous marks.

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## REFERENCES

[Callary, B., & Young, B. \(2016\). What Women are Saying About Coaching Needs and Practices in Masters Sport. \*Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching Online\*, 16\(3\), 1-5.](#)

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