

5°C 10:16 AM



Forecast

NEWS | OPINION | BUSINESS | SPORTS | ENTERTAINMENT | LIVING | TRAVEL | WHEELS | HEALTHZONE | YOURHOME | PARENTCENTRAL

Articles | Events | Athletes | Photos | Videos

Vancouver 2010



olympics thestar.com



Home Athletes Results Schedule Sports Photos Videos Vancouver Life

Login

## Time to bodycheck stress: Survival guide to Canada's defeat

Experts say meditation, deep breathing can beat anxieties caused by Canada's loss to U.S.

February 23, 2010

ROBERT CRIBB

A loss is like a death.

And when it's a Team Canada hockey loss to the United States at an Olympic Games on home ice, we, as a nation, must face the depths of our national despair.

Breathe deep.

It's going to be a stomach-churning six days if we are to get through this together and witness what our hockey nation has been waiting for since Canada was first named host for these Games – a Canadian men's hockey gold medal in what may be the most important tournament in this country's history.

Sunday night's shock loss to the U.S. may have been the death of hope for millions of breathless Canadian fans.

But from that dark night of the collective soul came the break-of-day promise of a more circuitous international path to glory.

It begins Tuesday night against Germany then against Russia Wednesday night, a semifinal Friday and, if there is justice in the world, the gold-medal final on Sunday. Four must-win games in six days.

Like the athletes themselves, fans face an emotional and physical test, experts say. Expect to suffer sleeplessness, dry mouth, skin disorders, fingernail disintegration, low productivity, inability to focus and the frequent need to urinate.

"You can't label the country of Canada as having a generalized anxiety disorder, but it's probably not very different from what are experienced by individuals," said Dr. Dennis Lin, assistant professor of psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of medicine in New York.

"It is possible for a group of people as a family or tribe, city or nation to experience anxiety and feel they are in a state of crisis."

You can also add to the emotional angst the prospect of plummeting national productivity in already uncertain economic times. Experts say as energy levels concentration decreases, our ability to work falls too. That could mean a week-long Canadian GDP drop starting now.

"I think this could be a devastating effect on productivity," said Deborah Zinni, chair of organizational behaviour and human resource management at Brock University's business school. "People aren't going to get their work done. Already we're wondering if we're going to beat Germany and then we have to wait for the Russian game."

But Zinni, who is studying productivity and work/life balance among minor hockey parents, says there will be long-term gains in the workplace from the Games.

"We're seeing some very positive patriotism. It's getting people from all backgrounds talking together in the workplace about our country. I think that could turn to a long-term productivity gain."

In the meantime, there are personal coping skills for managing what lies ahead on the bumpy path to international hockey supremacy, says Debbie Mandel, a New York-based stress management expert and author of *Addicted to Stress*.

Visualization of positive outcomes isn't just a mental trick for athletes, she says. Stressed-out fans can benefit from solitary mental exercises as well.

"When you hit a wall, you've got to see yourself climbing over it," she advises. "You could do visualization of you

[Smaller Text](#) | [Larger Text](#)

[Email this Article](#)

[Print this Page](#)

[Report Typo or Correction](#)



### Tips to combat angst

*A nation has turned its lonely eyes to mental health experts in search of tips for dealing with the emotional tumult of Olympic hockey. Here's a sampling of their advice:*

- Exercise: It relieves anxiety, dampens the stress hormones in your body, releases endorphins and improves focus.
- Deep breathing: It oxygenates the brain
- Visualization: It lowers blood pressure and promotes well being.
- Meditation: Attaining zen helps you to control your thoughts and interactions.
- Letting it go: Understand there's only so much you can control. For the rest, learn to adapt to changes and circumstances as they emerge.

### Vancouver 2010

Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
CAN	5	4	1	10
USA	7	8	10	25
GER	7	9	5	21
NOR	6	3	5	14
RUS	2	3	6	11
CAN	5	4	1	10
KOR	4	4	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>162</b>

© The Canadian Press, 2010



advertisement



[Muscle building miracle discovered](#)



[Slow PC? Restore it to like-new performance](#)



[Breakthrough discovery for joint relief](#)



### Curling Rocks

Give it a shot! Go to [www.torontocurling.com](http://www.torontocurling.com) to find a club near you. more

OLYMPICS: If They Built It, Would You Come? -

PODIUM: Elvis Stojko explains Virtue, Moir and the wisdom of figure skating crowds -

PHOTOLOG: Curling Rocks -

DAVEPERKINS: Spectacular views and Chief Wahoo, too -

celebrating."

As damaging as Sunday's loss might have been to the national psyche, it's important to keep it in perspective, says Ulrich Schimmack, associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto who watched the Canada-U.S. game with his own sense of looming dismay.

Research shows we exaggerate the impact of these kinds of events on our overall happiness and well being, he says.

"Even for the die-hard hockey fan, life moves on," Schimmack said. "Typically, a few days later we kind of forget about it and attention moves on to new things, especially in this fast-paced society."

However resilient we might be, the emotional influence of Olympic hockey in Canada – whether it be highs or lows – is intensified by the communal experience, he says.

"We know the next-door neighbour is watching the same thing and we're going to talk about it the next day ... There is a feeling that we're in it together and that makes even a loss more of a bittersweet experience. It's not just you."

Source: Toronto Star

TRAVEL: Riding the rails to Whistler - a great way to travel -

PHOTOBLOG: Men's figure skaters make their heads spin! -

OLYMPICS: If It Were Easy, Everyone Would Own The Podium -

### What Canadian gold-medal performance has thrilled you the most so far?

- Bilodeau's mogul gold
- Nesbitt's speed skating gold
- Ricker in snowboarding
- Jon Montgomery in skeleton
- Moir and Virtue ice dance
- Best is yet to come

[Vote](#) | [View Results](#)

#### DiManno: Moir and Virtue, a glorious, golden duo

According to the bio's I've seen, haven't they been dancing together since she was 7 and he 9?

XVYS

#### What will it take for Team Canada to get gold? Tell us

Leave the watching for us at home. They should check their blind spot whoever has the puck. Be more...

BOYTIGAS

#### Cox: Conflict in the net as Luongo takes over

Looks like Damien was up late typing again. It is laughable to compare switching from Brodeur to...

FINNBAR

#### Plushenko a contender for worst Olympics loser but unobtainium? The IOC should strip him of his silver medal and award it to the winner of the...

DAVID42

#### Cox: Conflict in the net as Luongo takes over

I'm sorry Damien but were watching the same game??? Not only was Brodeur bad or responsible for 3...

SSDN2500

#### What will it take for Team Canada to get gold? Tell us

Great hockey, like the no touch icing. The players are all talented in some way or another between...

PROTOCOL

**thestar.com** | [Corrections](#) | [Contact Webmaster](#) | [FAQ](#) | [RSS](#) | [Wheels](#) | [Healthzone](#) | [Yourhome](#) | [Parentcentral](#)

**Toronto Star** | [About Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Self Services](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [News Releases](#) | [Star Internships](#) | [Careers at the Star](#)

**Advertise With Us** | [Media Kit](#) | [Online Advertising](#) | [Print Advertising](#) | [Special Sections](#)

**Initiatives**

[Santa Claus Fund](#) | [Fresh Air Fund](#) | [Community Giving](#) | [Classroom Connection](#) | [Speakers Bureau](#)

**Torstar Sites**

[toronto.com](#) | [ourfaves.com](#) | [Pages of the Past](#) | [Star Store & Photo Sales](#) | [New In Homes](#) | [More...](#)



© Copyright Toronto Star 1996-2010  
[Comment Guidelines](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Privacy Code](#)

