

THE QUIZ

Test Your CQ

Check your Confidence Quotient to see if you're too cocky or too chicken

AN OFF-KILTER CONFIDENCE level can trip up even the most dedicated runner. Having too little faith can hold back an otherwise ambitious competitor, while feeling invincible can lead to an early flameout. Take this decidedly unscientific quiz to find your CQ, and then look to the answer key for ways to adjust your attitude. —*Jayme Moye*

1 The starter's pistol goes off in three days. You're:

- (A) Sick to your stomach, wondering, *What was I thinking when I entered?*
- (B) Laying out your race gear, thinking, *I am so going to nail a PR this time!*
- (C) Anxious but excited; you've worked hard and are ready to compete.

2 You show up for a group recovery run only to realize it's speedwork day. Your first thought is:

- (A) *Shoot. Guess I'm running by myself this morning.*
- (B) *Even better. Let's do this!*
- (C) *No biggie. I'll warm up with them and see if I'm up for a more intense workout.*

3 Your new training partner suggests an on-the-spot superfast tempo run. You feel:

- (A) Discouraged. What if you're not as fast as he hoped?
- (B) Excited. It's going to be fun kicking his butt!
- (C) Happy. Slow or fast, his enthusiasm is contagious.

4 At a local 10-K, you decide to line up:

- (A) Near the back, behind everyone who looks like a real runner but in front of the people with strollers.
- (B) At the starting line, with your finger on your stopwatch.
- (C) Depends on your goals for that particular race, and who you're running it with.

If you chose **MOSTLY A's**

You tend to lack confidence, preferring to play it safe with your running. → Doubting your ability can lead to performance anxiety, which may show up as cramping and stomach issues on the course.

Mind over matter → Come up with counterarguments to your cautious thoughts, says sports psychologist Sharon Chirban. Play out various race-day scenarios. Before the start, visualize your prior best performances.

If you chose **MOSTLY B's**

You have plenty of confidence and enjoy pushing the envelope with your running. → Overestimating your ability can lead to injury from overtraining if you begin to neglect your body's signals and limits.

Mind over matter → Put an external feedback loop in place, says Jeffrey L. Brown, coauthor of *The Winner's Brain*. A partner or coach can keep your ambitions on a healthier scale. Try yoga to develop an honest mind-body link.

If you chose **MOSTLY C's**

You have the confidence to go outside of your comfort zone while respecting your body's limits. → This level of "contextual confidence" is most conducive to successful performance. It helps you decide to push yourself, or to back off, and feel good either way.

Mind over matter → To get here, shift your focus from the finish line to the day-to-day gains. Learn from every run and you've established the foundation of true confidence, says Chirban.

