

Staying Power

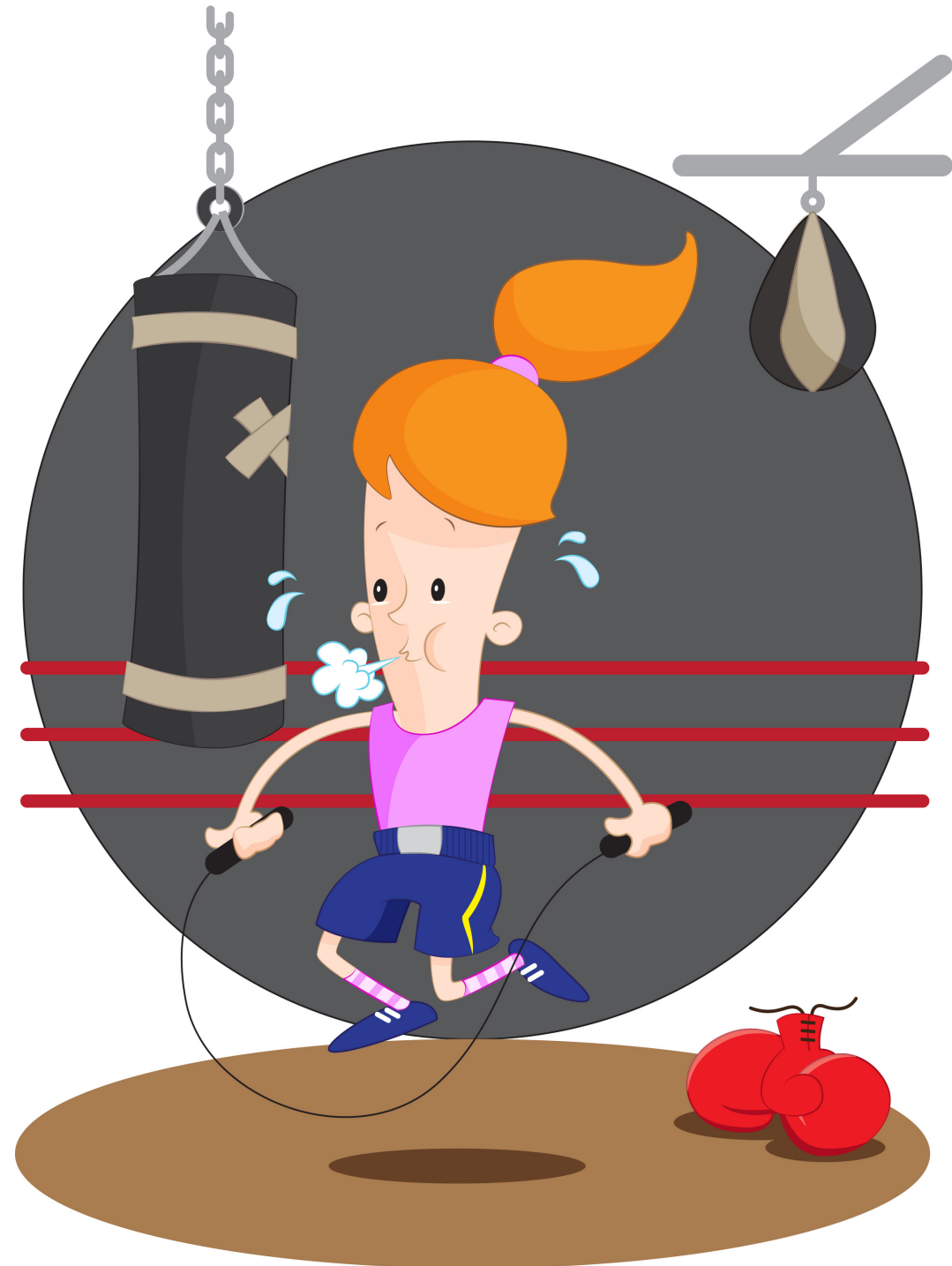
Endurance is a key element in fitness, and one I am working to obtain. It is also a key element in a life of faith. The Bible uses words like “patience,” “steadfastness,” and “endurance” in relation to the concept of faith.

I have to admit, I don’t love the idea of endurance. Toughing it out when it’s hard, hanging in there when things are difficult, or sticking to something that’s not turning out as planned is not an easy thing to do. The Bible has some pretty cool promises for when it seems hard to endure:

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”¹

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”²

Both of these scriptures let us know that there is a reward for hanging in there and enduring whatever it is that God is calling us to bear. It’s one of those if/then clauses you can often find in God’s Word.



We can all accept the concept of endurance when we're talking about fitness, athletic training, or conditioning for combat. No one would think much of an athlete who tries to compete in the Olympics without first building their stamina and skills through an intense training regimen. Anyone who cares about their physical fitness will work to develop their endurance—from the amount of weight they can press to the length of time they can hold a pose or the number of laps they can run.

You can probably think of how “endurance training” is relevant in your life. Maybe it's the amount of focus you need in order to understand a scholastics subject that just does not “click” with you. Maybe it's learning to have a gracious and positive attitude toward a health issue or physical disability. Perhaps you have a tough living situation that does not seem to offer the promise of getting better anytime soon. It could even be as difficult as enduring ridicule for your personal convictions about what you should or shouldn't do.



Endurance is one of the qualities that produce rich faith. When an athlete wins a gold medal, he or she gets a lot of respect. Everyone knows that the athlete has had to endure an immense amount of physical hardship and training to get into the Olympics, and even more to perform better than the stiff competition. The same kind of credit goes to those whose faith has endured through some tough things. It's easy to recognize that there is a depth and richness to that faith that doesn't come cheap.

All that to say, don't be surprised if you find yourself in situations that require all your "staying power" and then some. The Bible goes so far as to tell us that we should be excited when our faith is tried. Why is that? Because after each test of our faith, there is a reward—be it character, a better understanding of things, and perhaps even tangible blessings. Whatever it may be, it sure is worth it.

What's more, you're in good company. Everyone whose character and strength you admire has been through the same rigorous endurance training. Before you know it, you will be able to encourage someone else to "hang in there" because you have seen the rewards of endurance in your own life.

SPELLING BEE



Footnotes

¹ Hebrews 10:36 ESV

² Galatians 6:9 ESV

S&S link: Character Building: Personal Responsibility: Excellence-2c
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