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## Gold medal hopes pinned on work, rest and play

In preparation for the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games, Olympic medallist and gold medal contender Jared Tallent has maintained a sport-life balance in association with the findings of a recent study of Australian elite athletes.

The National Athlete Career and Education (NACE) program and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) ACE program at the Australian Sports Commission has found sporting performance may be boosted by a well-balanced lifestyle combining work, study and training

Tallent, who won two medals at the 2008 Beijing Olympics including silver and bronze in the 50 and 20 kilometre walks, says he is hoping a well-balanced lifestyle can lead to more international success.

'There's definitely a positive relationship between my life balance and athletic performance,' he said. 'I have been able to maintain long periods of being injury free mainly because I haven't over trained and have spent time on other commitments.'

The survey of 143 AIS athletes looked at their attitudes and approaches to sport, study and other activities.

NACE consultant, Dr Nathan Price said the findings of the study indicate that sport-life balance has a positive effect on an athlete's performance and longevity in their sport.

'More than 90 per cent of athletes surveyed indicated they believed that actively engaging in non-sporting pursuits helped to lengthen their sporting career,' Dr Price said.

'Of those athletes that were studying or working, 72 per cent believed that their sporting performance benefited from them undertaking education or employment.'

Tallent currently combines his training with studying a Bachelor of Business Studies in Financial Planning at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University.

'It's easy to let sport take over when you are competing at an elite level,' Tallent said. 'But it's good to have other passions in life so that you have something to move on to once you finish your sporting career.'

The Athlete Career Education program supports more than 3000 elite athletes across Australia each year in managing their education, work and sports performance, as well as preparing them for life after sport.

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