

IN-PSYCH FOR SPORTS: IMPRINTING THE IDEAL PERFORMANCE STATE

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Use all your senses in imaging the Ideal Performance State. Learn how to deal with competition anxiety, to recover from setbacks, to park distractions and refocus on your game plan for high performance and achievement.

PURPOSE: This session, like others in the series, borrows strongly from the well-researched capacities of imagery to guide subsequent behavior. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the field of athletic performance, where research and experience have shown superior output and precision from individuals and teams when accurate imagery is employed by athletes.

1. **SEND THE TENSION AWAY.** The session begins simulating the competitive environment in which training, practice, and competition are likely to occur. The athlete uses a focusing tension-release imagery exercise "Sending the Numbers Away" to allow the mind to settle into the alpha zone.

2. **IMAGINE THE IDEAL PERFORMANCE STATE.** Then the athlete images The Ideal Performance State (IPS), a scene in which he/she performs as perfectly as possible, to the extent of expanding the limits of his/her ability. The experience should be beautiful and exciting, with detail and eventually vividness.

3. **COPING WITH DIFFICULTIES.** A second scene deals with coping with difficulties, such as errors in execution, bad calls by the referee, or a run of quick scoring by the other team. These factors call for adjustment and refocusing with a positive attitude. All problems are overcome with confidence and renewed dedication, ultimately ending with a strong finish.

4. **AFFIRMATIONS AND PRACTISING THE IPS IN DEEP RELAXATION.** Now the athlete can settle into even deeper into the theta state while the athlete reaffirms personal worth, deservedness, and confidence. The IPS is rehearsed once again with a sense of deep satisfaction and confidence, emphasizing smoothness, flow, and mastery.

5. PRACTISING THE IPS IN THE HIGH ALPHA STATE. At this point in the session, the athlete is ready for the final phase, going quickly into the high alpha state. To bring the level of activation up a level, the athlete does 5 quick "pumping" muscle flexes of whatever muscle group he/she uses most in that sport. Now he/she can practice the IPS in this simulated competitive environment of higher arousal, finishing energized while hanging loose but precise, confident and "in the Zone."

6. AFFIRMATIONS WHILE RETURNING TO THE HERE AND NOW. While listening to affirmations, the athlete returns to the outside world in the last 30 seconds of the session.