

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY SWIM CLUB,
MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAM 1994-96**

Frank D. Young PhD., C.Psych.1 [1]

1. FORMATS

Meetings with coaching staff, reviewing previous years' programs, objectives, performance outcomes, then current plans, needs of the athletes and coaches.

Consulting on how to integrate mental training within the overall training program, exercises and simulations, implementation strategies.

Presentations to entire team with at least one of the 6 leading coaches present, review results with coaches, provide consultation to coaches regarding mental training program implementation strategies, and trouble-shooting with individual athletes.

This program is presented as mental training to enhance performance of all athletes, not as problem solving for selected athletes with difficulties such as competition anxiety. Nevertheless, consultations with coaching staff regarding how to approach or deal with individual athletes can be provided. Additionally, arrangements can be made for private sessions with athletes requesting individual sessions. However, such sessions are usually considered outside of, but congruent with, the outline of this program.

2. TEAM SESSION: HOW IMAGERY GUIDES OUR BEHAVIOR

Presentation and demonstration on topics:

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Optimal Functioning defined

Parts of the Brain, how they help and hinder performance

Demonstration: Ring on a String

Effortless Performance: You set the parameters, then let it play

Creating an Image

Cultivating Attraction

Realistic: Suited to your body

Visual, external and internal

Auditory

Kinesthetic and Tactile

Olfactory, senses of smell and taste

Setting a Practice or Game Objective

Re-accessing the Image of the Ideal Performance State

Adjusting to the Flow, Preserving Focus

Principles of Goal Setting

Implications for non-sports applications of these principles.

Resource audiotope: In-Psych for Sports, by Dr. Young, can be made available to team members.

3. TEAM SESSION: CONTROL OF ACTIVATION LEVEL:

CUSTOMIZED PROGRESSIVE MUSCULAR RELAXATION

Presentation, Demonstrations, and Discussion on topics:

Activation control as the building block for all mental training

Progressive Muscular Relaxation

Focused or Customized PMR to reduce body tension:

1. Easy muscles grouped.
2. More difficult areas individually focused to release tension.
3. Muscles specific to the sport relaxed to tune extra sensory acuity.
4. Study the differences and results, prepare readiness for smooth relaxed movement in sport.

Resource audiotape: Tension Release: Customized Progressive Muscular Relaxation, by Dr. Young, can be made available to team members.

4. TEAM SESSION: CONTROL OF ACTIVATION LEVEL:

BREATHING CONTROL AND IMAGERY

Presentation, Demonstrations, and Discussion on topics:

Dissociative Imagery, taking a break, getting away from it all, Your Special Place, Your Room for Improvement

Wave-Pattern Breathing

Resource audiotape: Wave Pattern Breathing, by Dr. Young, can be made available to team members.

5. TEAM SESSION: IMAGERY TRAINING

IMPRINTING THE IDEAL PERFORMANCE STATE

This session builds on the first team session on imagery. By now the team has been using the audiotape, and have begun constructing their individual IPSs. This session is to review their progress and refine their methods, specifying individual images in the following format:

Use all your senses in imaging the Ideal Performance State.

Focusing on relevant task features and the process of technique.

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.

1. Send the tension away imagery exercise "Sending the Numbers Away" to allow the mind to settle into the alpha zone.
2. Imagine the Ideal Performance State. The experience should be beautiful and exciting, with detail and eventually vividness.
3. Coping with Difficulties. 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 of success, enjoyment, and confidence, emphasizing smoothness, flow, and mastery.
5. Replay of the IPS in the high alpha state.

6. TEAM SESSIONS: SELF-ESTEEM AND PERSONAL ATTITUDE

Exercise: Self-Assessment: Who are You?

Exercise: The Circle of Yourself (% sectors home, family, occupation, friends, activities, roles, athletic role, your identity within the sport),

Considering how these factors help and hinder performance. You will tend to perform within the parameters of your comfort zone.

Self-Handicapping, The Underdog, The Apology Lifestyle

(procrastination, under-preparation, seeming laziness

Negative Self-Talk

Problems of Containment of Errors, Overgeneralization

Being Intimidated by Other Teams or Venues

Sloppy Appearance, posture

Overly Showy Appearance or Behavior

Victimhood and Blaming, Shame

Obsession with Comparisons

A Realistic Self-Image, Yourself as the Standard, Competing with yourself using others as foils to hone your ability and challenge you to excellence.

Ignoring the placements and focusing on the skills that will get you there.

Guided Imagery Exercise: The Room for Improvement

Cueing in During Higher Arousal States

Motivation: Coping with plateaus, slumps, and recovery from setbacks, managing the expectation gradient, upgrading reference group beyond nation and into top world level. Reframing situations positively.

Mutual Team Support: How to give and receive the support you need with your team.

Note: Due to the wide content and allowance for discussion, this topic will need 2+ sessions to cover.

7. TEAM SESSION: COPING WITH ERRORS

Monitoring Self-Talk

- (a) Anticipated error: see it, see the correction, do the correction, do I.P.S., then file it away.
- (b) Error during execution of a sequence: Technical focus: adjust with a compensating correction. Mark it and park it. Prepare next move in sequence. Emotional focus: this is now a technical run, go for improvement under adversity.
- (c) In break in the action after an error: Technical focus: focus on the correction, erase all further replays unless you do not know how the error occurred. If possible, delay correction considerations until after the competition. If not, handle like Anticipated Error. Emotional focus: re-stabilization of self-image. Seek positive support. Learn how to prompt and receive it.
- (d) At the end of the day: Technical focus: discuss with coach or team captain. Emotional focus: much more important. Reset your objectives for the remaining championship, be realistic, not pessimistic. Put things in perspective. More emotional support transactions, allow contained grieving to occur.
- (e) In the weeks after the event: Technical focus: careful technical analysis. Re-simulations to overlearn the corrective response until confidence restored. If necessary, go back to fun and confidence drills then work up to corrective re-simulation.

8. TEAM SESSION: CONFIDENCE AND A WINNING ATTITUDE

Preseason: Ruling out the worst case scenarios re injury and delay of training. Ruling out doubt about self-embarrassment or letting people down.

Preparation Phase: All doubts now covered and dealt with, seeing self as medium level, the challenger, the come from behind occasional winner.

Competition Phase: Seeing self in the world medalist class, the consistent winner, learning how to be the champion, using the advantages of being the champion

Components of the Winning Attitude

Team support and mutual winning atmosphere, how to promote it.

9. TEAM SESSION: DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

IN THE COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT

Crowds and Noise

Lack of privacy and autonomy

Security arrangements and isolation from family contact

Declaring mental space and disconnection when competing at home athletic venue

Media interviews and reviews, expectations positive and negative

Other teams' uniforms, equipment, money, warmup routines, good performance in practice runs

Hecklers and fans, distracting cheers, foreign languages and customs

Sudden changes in the weather or other conditions

Delays or officiating irregularities.

Pre-competition and Competition Strategies discussed, simulated, and mentally rehearsed

Taming and Training the Butterflies.

11. TEAM SESSIONS: PRECOMPETITION AND COMPETITION STRATEGIES

Extensions of how to plan your activities with the coaching staff and teammates for maximum focusing

Emphasis on simulations and coping strategies

12+. TEAM SESSIONS: SPECIALIZED TOPICS IN ADVANCED MENTAL TRAINING

Based on coaches' feedback re athletes' needs

U. OF C. SWIM CLUB MENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM

Frank D. Young Ph.D.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. PROMOTE MENTAL TRAINING AS A BASIC COMPONENT OF ALL TRAINING AND COMPETITION.**
- 2. PREPARE NATIONAL LEVEL SWIMMERS TO COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY INTERNATIONALLY.**
- 3. KEY IN MENTAL TRAINING FACTORS SO THAT THESE ATHLETES ARE FULLY PRPARED FOR MEDAL PERFORMANCES AT THE 1996 OLYMPICS.**

FORMAT:

- 1. TEAM MEETINGS OF 12-18 ATHLETES PER SESSION, COVERING THE TOPICS IN THE FORMAT OUTLINE ENCLOSED.**
- 2. OPTIMAL TIME SCHEDULE IS TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 5-6:30, COVERING THE FULL GROUP OF TOP SWIMMERS FOR 1 TOPIC SESSION PER WEEK.**
- 3. DEPENDING ON COMPETITION SCHEDULE, THESE SESSIONS CAN BE DONE WEEKLY OR BIMONTHLY.**
- 4. THE CYCLE OF TOPICS IS REVIEWED IN YEAR 2, WITH MORE FOCUSED AND SPECIALIZED APPLICATIONS.**

BUDGET:

- 1. WITH ABOUT 14 TEAM SESSIONS AND 4 COACHES MEETINGS, THIS MEANS A COMMITMENT OF 21 + 6 hr plus travel and preparation of topics and materials.**

2. THE CONSULTANT WILL LIKELY BE PRESENT AT OTHER FUNCTIONS SUCH AS
SELECTED COMPETITIONS AS NEEDED.

3. SUGGESTED HONORARIUM: \$3,000 PER ANNUM TIMES 2 YEARS.
