

Mental Warm-up: Support for Sports

This is a visualization tool to help athletes get into their “zone”. This tool leads athletes in an exercise to imagine themselves accomplishing their goals. The benefits of utilizing this tool are that athletes will gain confidence, decrease anxiety, boost motivation, improve mood, and so much more. This can be a tool that you can use before a game/ competition, before practice, or during halftime or breaks. Take the time to inspire your athletes.

Stand tall with your knees bent slightly and your feet shoulders’ width apart. In a moment you will take a slow, deep, breath through your nose, filling the lower part of your lungs, then the middle part, and, finally, the upper part of your lungs. After holding your breath for a few seconds, you will exhale slowly, relaxing your abdomen and chest. Now, breathe in-2-3-4 and out-2-3-4. Resume breathing normally. You can use deep breathing to calm yourself as needed. Now take a moment to get a clear mental picture of the main thing you want to accomplish today. You can close your eyes as you think about something that is within your control. What do you see in this mental picture of what you want to accomplish? What sensations do you notice in your body? What do you feel in your muscles? What sounds do you hear? What smells and tastes do you notice? Make the mental picture as clear and vivid as you can.

Okay, now let the mental picture fade and focus again on your breathing. Stand tall with your knees bent slightly and your feet shoulders’ width apart. Breathe in-2-3-4 and out-2-3-4. Now bring back the mental picture of the main thing you want to accomplish today. What do you see? What sensations do you notice in your body? What do you feel in your muscles? What sounds do you hear? Use all your senses to fully experience this mental picture, filled with the belief that you can make it happen today.

Let the mental picture fade once again. Imagine a warm glow forming in your stomach, right in your core. This warm glow is full of energy and is slowly starting to spread throughout your body. As the energy spreads, jump up and land with both feet. Shake out your arms and feel the energy starting to surge again from inside you. Feel the energy launch you into the air again, land, and shake out your arms. Keep that feeling of energy, and as you do, bring back the mental picture of the main thing you want to accomplish today one final time. Check your energy level. Use the warm glow of energy in your body or your breathing to find the level of energy you need and get yourself ready to perform.

You have the level of energy you need, you know what you want to accomplish, you believe you can accomplish it, and you are ready to do it. On the count of three, we will clap our hands three times and then go do it. 1,2,3

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