

Mind Games

When we mentally train, we align all levels of ability

By Donna Perry, B.A., M.Sc., CFC-CC

Athletes and coaches try to find the competitive edge. But they often miss one essential element—mental training using visualization. Visualization has a purpose and meaning when one visualizes about a specific goal that one wants to accomplish.

For example, with strength training, the individual can visualize lifting techniques as well as successful performances lifting heavier weights than usual. Paving the way mentally will help with creating a neural pathway and aid the individual in making more efficient, goal-directed movements.

Another method is scripting. Imagine yourself at the track, gym, or course. Your mind is on your race. Be aware of the environment, the weather, the sounds, whatever you can see. Notice the other people you are competing against or training with...feel yourself being calm, composed, and relaxed...feeling prepared, in tune with your body... looking forward to the challenge...running your best...feeling healthy, in shape, and fast...completely enjoying the feelings associated with the event.

Each visualization experience should be written and tailored to meet the desired outcome of the individual. Once you have a general understanding of what is important to you and to a good

performance or fitness program, you can simply create a script that will encapsulate the “perfect experience” and direct your focus to what it is that you want to accomplish. The beginning of visualization should always be preceded by progressive relaxation, centreing and letting go of your physical connections (Porter, 2003). Once you have done this, you use the visualization script on a regular basis, as a means of preparing you and to further develop your sport or fitness program, through imagery.

When we mentally train, we align all levels of ability, harnessing all of our resources and energizing and awakening the brilliant performer that lies within us all. 🌀

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