

Hypnotherapy for improved sporting performance

How to achieve it

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Agenda

Introduction

How the brain works

Before the event

During the event

After the event



Marketing

There are 151,000 sports clubs in the UK, with each club having an average of 141 adult members.

That is a lot of potential exposure for you and your business!



Stephanie Millward

Born in 1981, and British champion at 14. Aged 17, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis just before the 2000 Olympics. After a break of nearly 10 years, she now competes in the S9 Paralympic class, winning five medals in London 2012.

In 2014, she won the S9 400m Freestyle and 100m Backstroke titles for the third consecutive IPC Swimming European Championships, and also added gold over 100m Free and both 34pt relays as well as 200m IM silver and 100m Fly bronze.

2016 Rio Paralympics: Steph Millward wins gold in the S8 100m backstroke.



Stephanie Millward



**Glen Cattley –
super middleweight
champion**

Chippenham Harriers

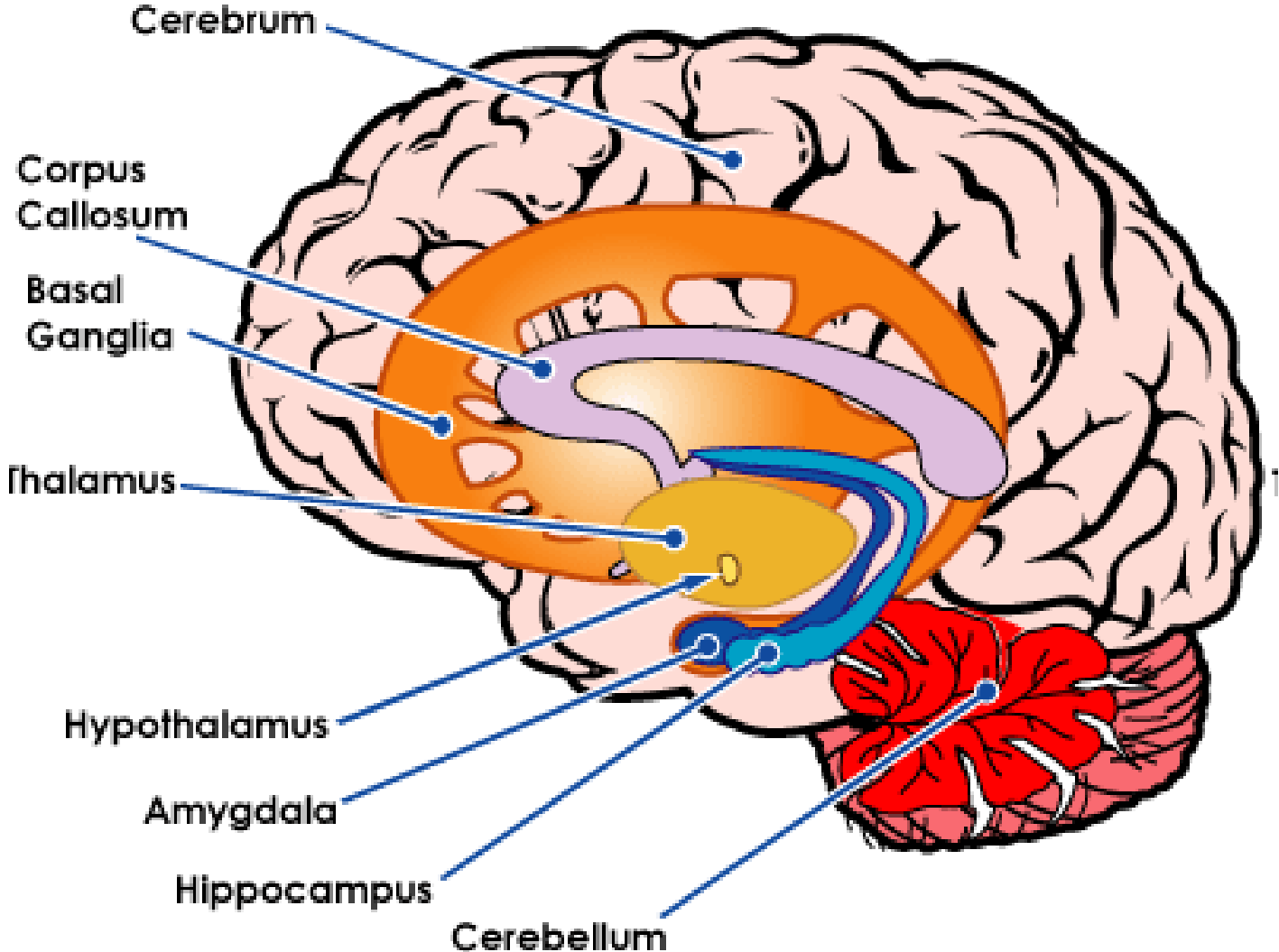


Sports hypnosis

- Reinforce established sporting goals
- Increase motivation
- Improve bodily awareness
- Handle nervousness
- Manage stress
- Be able to relax
- Concentrate better
- Ignore distractions
- Control pain



How the brain works



How the brain works



Mahout

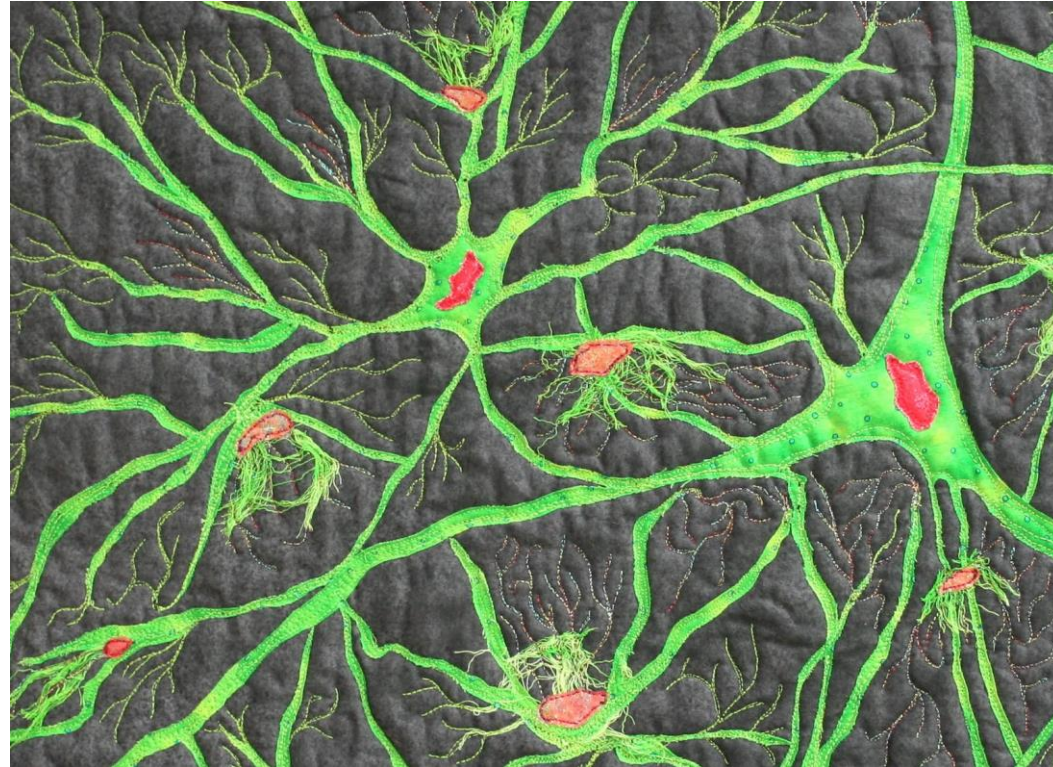
The green brain

To save energy, the brain chooses to do what it has always done – habits.

Use your Intellectual Brain to behave in a different way.



Neural pathways



Neurogenesis and neuroplasticity

Left pre-frontal cortex



Positive thoughts

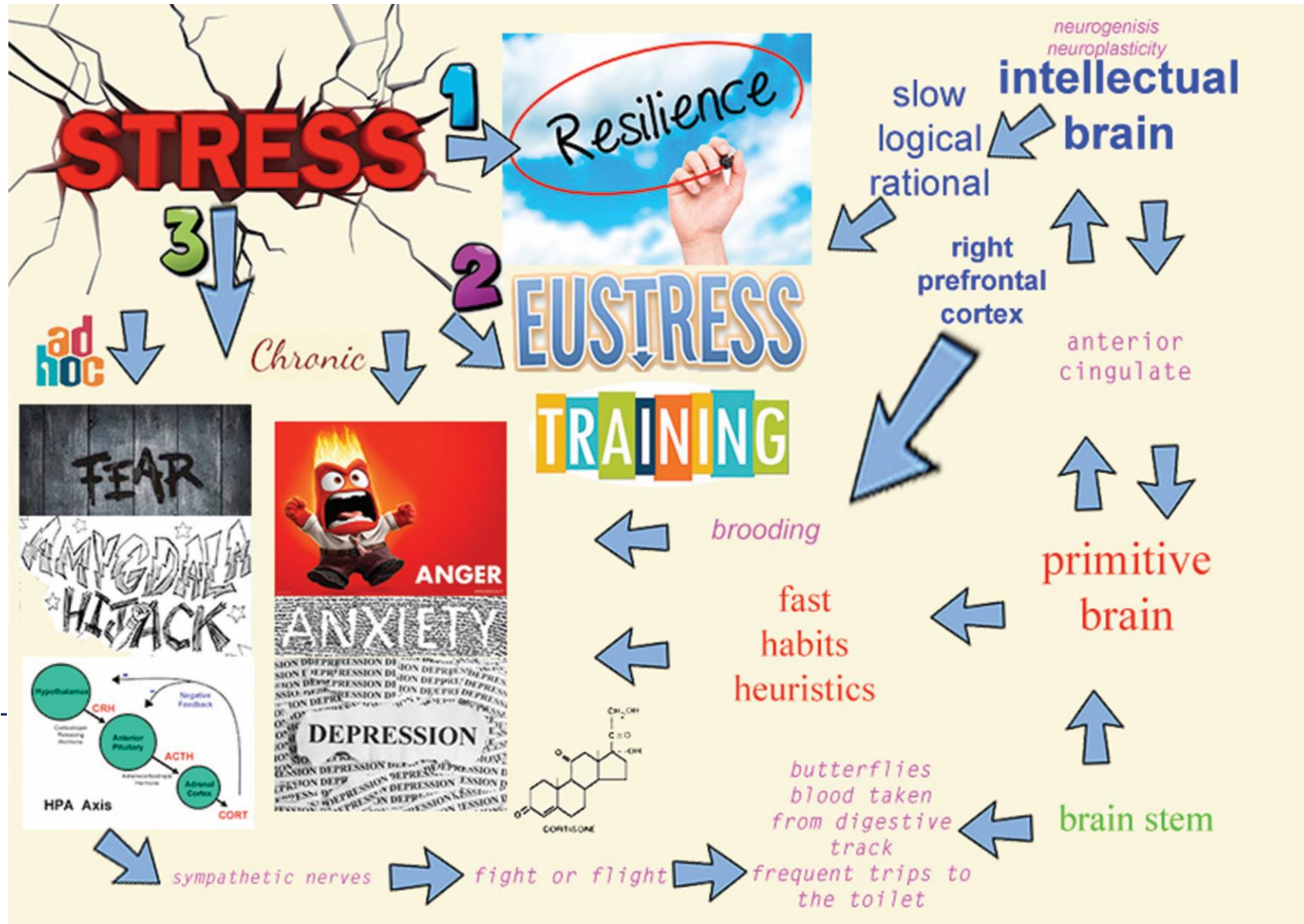
Right pre-frontal cortex



Negative introspection
Negative prediction



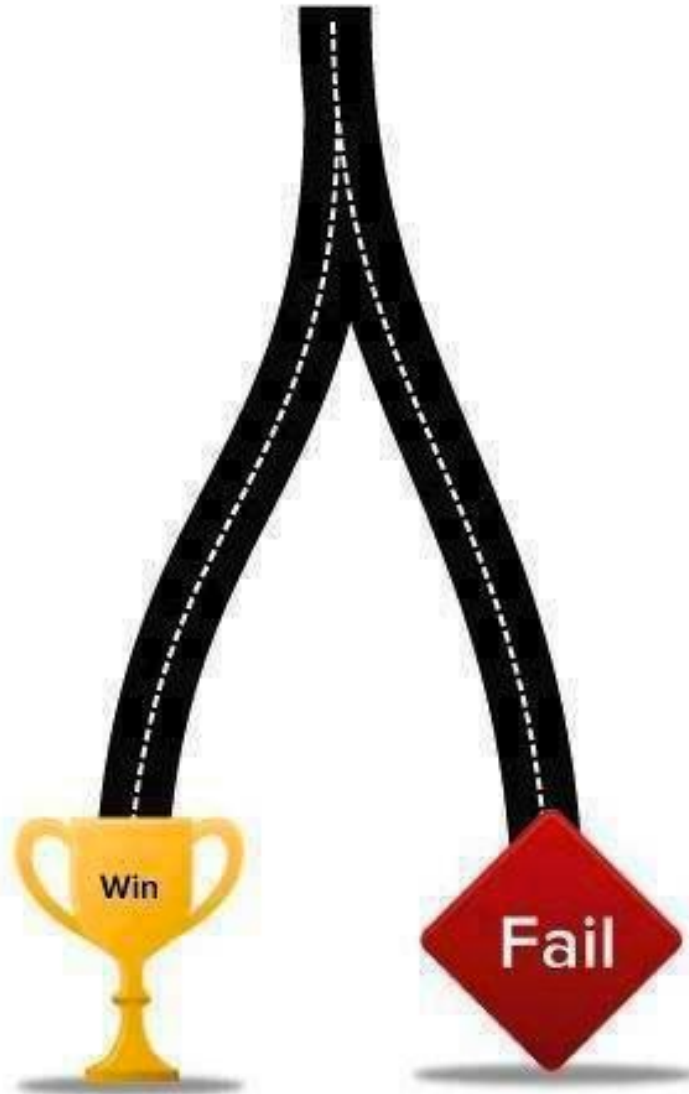
SAM and HPA axis



Sympatho-medullary Pathway



What Most People Think



What Successful People Know



Before the event

- **Goals**
- **Practice/Rehearsal**
 - What ifs**
 - Mental agility**
 - Remove hesitation**
 - Install complex behaviours**





**Before
the event**

- **Eat properly**
- **Sleep plenty**
- **Exercise**



**Before
the event**

**Senses
proprioception
Stance**



**Before
the
event**

**Capability
Concentration
Confidence**



Confidence

**Confidence (self-belief)
to perform at the
highest level from start
to finish.**

How you think

How you act.



Confidence

**Decide how you want
to behave
Visualize doing it
Step into that world.**



Let go of the past

- **Lose negative feelings**
- **Focus on positive goals.**

Build your future

- **Spend time with the positive people.**
- **Spend time with experts at your sport.**
- **Have clear and definite goals.**

Build your future

**What would have to be
different for you to achieve
your goal?**

Pain in training

- **No pain, no gain?**
- **Seek medical advice immediately?**

Pain in training

- **Reframe – call it discomfort, scale it, cool down the discomfort and reduce the pain**
- **Distraction – swear and feel less pain/squeeze arm**
- **Dissociate – imagine riding a horse/be at the beach**
- **Glove anaesthesia/headache cure**

Anxiety

Anxiety can be defined as feelings of unease, worry, and fear that can be mild or severe. Anxiety refers to both the emotions and the physical sensations a person might experience when they are worried or nervous about something.



Anxiety

Amygdala anxiety.

**Prefrontal cortex
anxiety.**

**Thoughts from LPC
Pictures from RPC**



Anxiety

- **Pounding heart**
- **Rapid breathing/hyperventilation**
- **Stomach distress/nausea**
- **Diarrhoea**
- **Muscle tension**
- **Wanting to run away**
- **Perspiration/sweating**
- **Difficulty focusing**
- **Immobilization**
- **Trembling/shaking**
- **Chills or hot flushes**





Relaxation

Away from competitions



Relaxation

- Laugh
- Enjoy yourself.
- It increases positivity/optimism/resilience.



Relaxation

- **Scripts**
- **Down time**
- **Going out time**

Relax

- **Slow deep breathing**
- **Diaphragmatic breathing (abdominal breathing)**
- **Progressive muscle relaxation**
- **Visualizations**
- **Meditation**
- **Exercise**
- **Sleep**



Relax

- **Avoid catastrophizing**
- **Cognitive defusion**
- **Cognitive restructuring**
- **Plan rather than worry**
- **Engage the left hemisphere**
- **Engage the right hemisphere**
- **Mindfulness.**

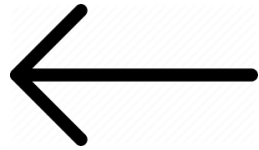


Motivation theories

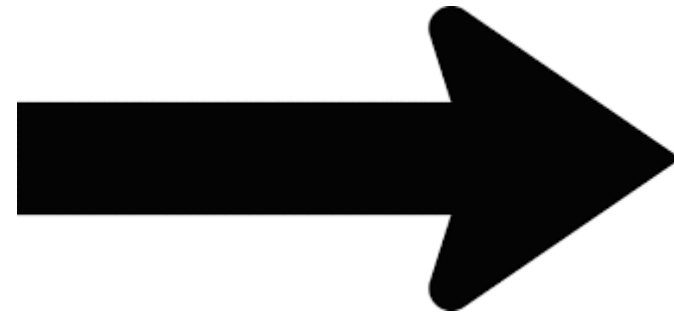
- Incentive theory
- Drive-reduction theory
- Cognitive dissonance theory
- Content theories (eg Maslow)
- Temporal motivation theory
- Achievement motivation
- Cognitive theories

Motivation

Towards rewards



Away from harm.



Motivation/ goals

Vision board

- State goal in sensory terms
- List resources needed
- Place on timeline
- Make it manageable
- What steps do you need to take.

Motivation/ goals

Self talk

Positive language

Always “do <achieve
goal>”

Never “don’t <fail>”.



What do you want to do?

- **Moving away from/Moving towards**
- **SMART goals**
- **Intrinsic and extrinsic goals**
- **Visualize steps not just successful completion**
- **Set a specific time and date for activity**
- **Record activity**
- **Limiting beliefs**



Self-motivated

- **Greater confidence**
- **Improved vitality**
- **More interest**
- **Enhanced performance**
- **Increased persistence**
- **Greater creativity**
- **Higher self-esteem**
- **Increased general well-being.**



Motivation

Modelling the best

Imagine what they'd do.

How would they do it/how do they feel.

Step into the picture – feel it/do it.





Motivation

Dopamine

When you want something.

When you enjoy doing something (with rewards)

When you get what you want.



Motivation

‘Carrots’ and ‘sticks’ can be used to improve performance.

Punishing mistakes accelerates adaptation, whereas rewarding good behaviour improves retention of the behaviour.



Concentration

- **Practice under pressure.**
- **Distract yourself**
- **Don't slow down**
- **Focus on the outcome not the mechanics**
- **Concentrate on a mantra (eg 'smooth')**
- **Change your grip**
- **Be positive.**



Visualizations

- **What you see/hear/feel/smell/taste (submodalities).**
- **At full speed/slow motion.**



Overcoming negative beliefs

- Lose negative feelings
- Focus on positive goals
- Dickens process.

Cognitive bias

Daniel Kahneman identified a cognitive bias that he called the peak-end effect.

Laughter

- **Strengthens relationships**
- **Promotes group bonding**
- **Defuses conflict situations**
- **Increase a person's resilience to stress**
- **Create a positive outlook**



Laughter

- **Helps people be more innovative and creative**
- **Improves memory**
- **Reduces the amount of cortisone**
- **Relaxes a person's whole body**
- **Assists the lymphatic vessels in carrying fluid**
- **Relieves physical tension and stress**
- **Increases a person's energy levels**
- **Better able to cope with injuries**
- **Burns calories**
- **Reduce blood sugar levels.**



Modelling

New people quickly become as good as established people.

- Bandura
- Mirror neurons
- Marksmen



Distractions

- Know what to focus on
- Recognize when and why you've lost focus
- Refocus
- “Let it go, focus on the next play”



Optimism

Optimists do better.



How to attain your goals

To attain any of the goals you have set yourself this year, keep thinking about them, and the steps you need to take to attain them. And keep thinking about them (like a TV advert).



**How do
you see
yourself?**

Your thoughts are things, and they are constantly creating your reality. Whatever you think about expands in your life, which is why it does not matter what others think about you, it's what you think about yourself.



Techniques

- **Bucket emptying**
- **Confidence building/relaxation**
- **View things differently**
- **Reframing and future pacing**
- **Rewind**

Techniques

- **Dickens process**
- **Perceptual positions – athlete, competitors, audience.**
- **Slow motion rehearsal**
- **Picture someone 10 times better at staying under water than she was. We pictured how they felt as they did it. And stepped into that picture, internalizing those feelings and behaviours.**

*

Uses for perceptual positions

- Exploring their performance
- Planning
- Dealing with conflict
- Creating empathy
- Stepping back from challenging situations
- Being their own coach
- Learning new things

*



During the event

The problems

Choking
Dartitis
Yips
Target panic
etc

**Paralysis by
analysis**



Avoid choking by

- **Avoid prefrontal cortex**
- **Reaffirm your self worth**
- **Recognize stereotyping/look for examples that break stereotypes**
- **No failure, only feedback**
- **Focus on what you want/not don't want**



Relaxation

At competitions.

Getting 'in the zone'

Flow - the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.

Mihály Csíkszentmihályi

(pronounced mee hi chick sent ma hi ee)



Getting 'in the zone'

Owen Schaffer (2013) proposed seven flow conditions. They are:

- Knowing what to do
- Knowing how to do it
- Knowing how well you are doing
- Knowing where to go (if navigation is involved)
- High perceived challenges
- High perceived skills
- Freedom from distractions.



Getting 'in the zone'

- Relaxing.
- Anchoring.
- Act 'as if'.
- Shut out distractions.



Performing under pressure

- **ABC.**
- **Pre-performance routine.**
- **Positive self-talk.**
- **Visualize success.**
- **7-11 breathing.**

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Techniques

On the day:

- **Anchoring**
- **Peripheral vision relaxation**
- **Circle of excellence**
- **7-11 breathing**
- **Mindfulness urge surfing**



After the event

Brooding

- **Alcoholism**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Helplessness and passivity**
- **Cardiovascular disease**

Brooding

How to stop:

- **Become aware of what you're doing. Start noticing when you actively choose to revisit your pain.**
- **Acknowledge that you're thinking negatively.**
- **Get up and do something else, eg go for a walk, read a good book.**
- **Challenge your thinking. Is this really what you think or is it an inherited belief from your past?**
- **Ask yourself, is this thought helping or hurting you? If it is hurtful, consciously choose a thought that is more supportive, understanding, or positive.**
- **Give yourself a pep talk.**



Brooding

- Ask yourself whether this thought is useful.
- Bring your attention back to the present, and see that your negative thoughts are just that – thoughts not reality.
- Be forgiving. Forgiveness is a necessary part of releasing negative emotions such as bitterness, resentment, and anger. When we truly forgive someone, we also heal ourselves.
- Focus on ways to show compassion and understanding toward others.
- Say “just because” and reason with yourself, eg, “Just because I’ve struggled to find a good job doesn’t mean I will never find one in the future.”



Brooding

- For negative thoughts that are linked to a specific strong emotion like fear, anger, or jealousy, write down all your pent-up negativity. Then destroy the paper, symbolizing your commitment to moving on.
- **Don't phone a friend and moan to them (ie continue with your negative thoughts) and don't drink alcohol.**



Pain

- **All in the brain/SUDs**
- **Turn the dial up or down**
- **Catastrophizers/ Helpless**
- **Distraction/jokes**

Injury

levleva and Orlick (1999) noted that people who recovered the fastest from sports injuries were those who maintained a positive attitude, used creative visualization, had a high level of desire and determination to return to the sport, maintained social connections, experienced less fear of re-injury, and took responsibility for their recovery.

Ginandes and Rosenthal 1999 found “hypnosis may be capable of enhancing both anatomical and functional fracture healing”. *Using hypnosis to accelerate the healing of bone fractures: a randomized controlled pilot study.*

The power of your mind!

“When I wear my bee costume, I have no pain”

Pride of Britain award winner, with over £110,000 raised for charity

93 year old Jean Bishop aka The Bee Lady



Resilience

Resilient people:

- **Are more likely to perceive challenges and setbacks as manageable**
- **Have greater emotional stability**
- **Are better able to cope with daily hassles and major stressors**
- **Have greater energy**
- **Are curious and open to new experiences**
- **Are good at helping others to feel good.**



Resilience

- **Reduce stress by:**
 - **Distraction**
 - **Distancing**
 - **Disputation.**

Mindfulness

- **The initial problem – not winning. This is reality.**
- **Face it and make peace with it.**
- **The secondary problem – the mind's suffering. This is the response in your athlete's mind to the initial problem.**

Mindfulness

It starts with a judgement and that leads to an emotion, such as fear, anger, frustration, or hopelessness. That lead to various behaviours

Mindfulness

- **Accept that the emotion is real but the distress isn't.**
- **Stay focused on the present – and that way these negative thoughts about the past and the future are pushed into the background**



Anger

- **Feel threatened or are attacked.**
- **Feel frustrated or powerless.**
- **Feel treated unfairly or slighted**
- **Feel abandoned or overwhelmed.**

Anger

- **Breathing techniques such as 7-11 breathing**
- **Relaxation techniques such as tensing each part of the body in turn and then relaxing it.**
- **Going for a run, a swim, or a brisk walk to burn off the adrenaline in your body**
- **Distracting yourself by dancing to upbeat music, or try colouring, or take a cold shower**

Anger

- **Using Mindfulness techniques to recognize when you're getting angry and to calm down.**
- **Using a mantra such as 'relax' or 'keep calm'**
- **Trying Yoga**
- **Visualizing calm walks on the beach and other visualizations.**
- **Reading jokes.**



Appreciative Inquiry

1. *Discover* – Focus on what's good
2. *Dream* – Look at what needs to be improved.
3. *Design* – how to make everything good
4. *Destiny* – implementing the new design



Questions

