



Imagery Worksheet.

Imagery is much clearer and more controllable when people are calm (no tightness, anger or nervousness). To help learn to control muscle tension, it's good to practice a relaxation sequence that teaches your body to relax whenever you need.

Some people struggle with imagery, but everyone can do it quite well. Try having your athletes visualize as you read the paragraph below. Remind them to visualize looking out of their own eyes (1st person) instead of as an observer watching themselves.

"You are in your bedroom where you live. You are sitting on your bed. Stand up and walk over to the door. Reach out and open the door. Notice which hand you used. See the type of handle on the door and imagine feeling the breeze created by the door passing in front of your face. Go through the door and walk to the kitchen. See what is on the walls as you go. Imagine you are bare foot and feel the floor surface(s) as you walk.

Turn on the kitchen light and walk over to the fridge. Open the door and see that the fridge is empty except for a jar of dill pickles. You are hungry and thirsty.

Take the jar out and feel how heavy and cold the jar is. Twist off the top and hear the 'pop' sound.

Take a pickle out. It's cold and slimy.

Take a big bite. Hear the crunch sound and taste the pickle.

Now pick up the jar with both hands and take a big drink of the cold pickle juice."

To drive the point home about the power of visualization, you can ask your athletes the following questions:

- Did you notice your mouth start watering after you drank the imaginary pickle juice?
- What does this tell you about the connection between your body and visualization?
- How could this be useful to you?

Most people have never done what this sentence describes! However, they probably imagined doing it just fine! The point is, even if you've never performed well in front of a large audience, for example, you CAN imagine doing so. Visualizing being successful will then make it easier to actually perform successfully in front of large audiences!



Imagery Practice Ideas

Use the descriptions below to improve the quality of mental images. It should be easiest to imagine familiar objects and short trips taken before. Visualizing far away or imaginary locations can be more challenging if you've never been to them. Many people imagine beautiful locations while they try to calm themselves down. Lastly, visualize performing your sport or activity. Because of the changing nature of sport, it is easier to tape record sequences that are most likely to happen and then visualize them being done successfully. However, many athletes imagine themselves performing well in front of large crowds and dealing with all the adversity that would actually occur. This helps them to feel more comfortable when they are actually in that competitive situation.

1) Objects: Visualize these to increase your control over images. Directions: look at the object, then close your eyes and try to see the shape and color clearly:

- a) your shoes;
- b) a ball;
- c) tooth paste container;
- d) a car;
- e) any other object that seems interesting;

2) Trips: Visualize to improve your ability to see details. Directions: Imagine yourself going somewhere and pay attention to what is there (things, colors and smells)

- a) walk from your bedroom to your kitchen;
- b) drive from home to work or school;
- c) take a walk around the outside of your house;
- d) run one lap around the track (actually time yourself);
- e) imagine anything involving you moving somewhere;

3) Locations: These are usually used to relax or motivate. Directions: Imagine yourself being somewhere and then try to actually make your body experience it (scenery, temperature, sounds, and smells)

- a) lying on a warm sandy beach with a cool ocean breeze
- b) sitting in the middle of an open field full of flowers
- c) sitting in an outside hot tub with snow falling all around you
- d) hiking through a valley surrounded by enormous mountains
- e) any place that might relax you



4) Performance: The following are examples of how to practice visualizing performances. Athletes routinely do this to increase success during competition. Directions: Imagine a situation that you want to improve and then make it go well for you (if it starts to go bad, say STOP!, rewind the tape and play it until you see yourself do it properly). Here are some examples of how to do performance visualization:

a) Tennis: Imagine you are the server. Hit the serve out wide, the return comes back cross-court short, you approach with topspin down the line, the pass goes cross-court, and you volley down the line to win the point.

b) Golf: Imagine you are on the 18th hole, Par 5. Be sure to visualize the exact pre-shot and post-shot routine that you use when actually on the course. With your driver, you hit the ball straight down the fairway 300 yards. Your second shot is a 2 iron that you hit to within 20 yards of the green. Your third shot is a wedge that you chip within 6 feet of the hole. You put in for a birdie.

c) Basketball: Imagine you are in a close game with only seconds to play. The ball comes to you and you shoot an 18-foot jumper that goes in. You were fouled on the play and the score is now tied with no time left. You go to the foul line confidently, go through your pre-shot routine, visualize a perfect shot and then make it to win the game.

“I study pitchers. I visualize pitches. That gives me a better chance every time I step into the box. That doesn't mean I'm going to get a hit every game, but that's one of the reasons I've come a long way as a hitter.” - Mark McGwire (Hit 70 home runs to beat Roger Maris' record of 61)



Common Sequences Imagery Exercise

A) Write down the 5 most common sequences or actions that occur in your sport
(Examples: Tennis - serve & volley, re-turn & pass, approach & volley, volley & overhead, forehand cross then backhand cross; Basketball - pick & roll, give & go, block out & rebound, dribble & shoot, pass & cut).

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

B) Write down the 3 sequences or actions you need to improve most or that you need to execute well to win.

1)

2)

3)