

Energy Management Skills

- You can't avoid anxiety completely, so you must learn to work **with** it.
- For every athlete, sport and specific sport skill, there is an optimal level of activation that will produce the best performance. Your goal is to find your own personal optimal level for you.
 - Learning relaxation strategies help you control your anxiety.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script:

Get into a comfortable position. Begin breathing deeply, and then close your eyes. Continue to breathe deeply, releasing tension every time you exhale. Allow any tension to leave your body and any concerns about your day to leave your mind. Now focus on the muscles of your right arm. Tense those muscles as much as you comfortably can for 5 seconds. Now release the tension and allow your right arm to relax for approximately 45 seconds. Tense the muscles of your right arm again for 5 seconds and release for 45 seconds. Notice the contrast between being tense and being relaxed. Now focus on the muscles of your left arm and tense for 5 seconds, release for 45 seconds, tense for 5 seconds and release for 45 seconds. Again, notice how it feels for those muscles to become very relaxed. Now alternate tensing and relaxing [tense (5 seconds), relax (45 seconds), tense (5 seconds), and relax (45 seconds)] as you did with your arms for the following 5 muscle groups: (1) face area, (2) neck, (3) torso (upper body), (4) right leg, and (5) left leg. After you have proceeded through all muscle groups, scan your body to see if any tension remains. If you notice tension anywhere, make a note of it and let it go. Remain in this state of relaxation for several minutes, and recognize how your muscles feel to be this relaxed. Remember that you can return to this state as needed in the future. When you are ready slowly bring yourself out of the relaxed state by (1) moving your fingers and toes, (2) moving your arms and legs, (3) moving your head and neck, and (4) opening your eyes.

Sometimes, though, you can be too relaxed and not “psyched up” enough for training or a meet. Then you need to energize.

Energizing Steps

Close your eyes and eliminate distractions as much as possible.

1. Focus on the practice or competition situation.
2. Begin taking deep breaths.
3. With each inhale say “energy in.”
4. With each exhale say “fatigue out.”

Energizing Imagery Script

For this script begin by using energizing breathing. In your mind, say the following:

“I can feel my body gaining energy with every breath. With every inhale, I bring energy in; with every exhale, I send fatigue out. I can see the energy moving into my muscles as they prepare to propel me through my routines. I feel strong and powerful, yet at the same time my movements are effortless. I know exactly what to do and my body does it with energy.”

From: Karen Cogan, Ph.D., USOC Sport Psychology, karen.cogan@usoc.org, 719-352-6764