



GET A-HEAD:

A Handballer's Guide to
Developing the
Psychological Aspect of
Performance.

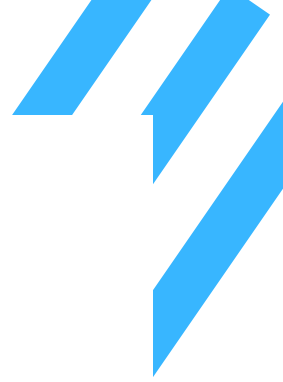


THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

MENTAL PERFORMANCE CONSULTING



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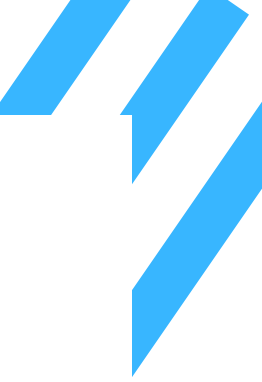
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Introductions



Who am I and What do I do?

My name is Ciana Ní Churraoin. I am a Mental Performance Consultant and handball player from Cumann Liathróid Láimhe Mícheál Breathnach, Co. Galway .I completed an M.A in Sport & Exercise Psychology from Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota, USA. I was lucky enough to gain invaluable experience in the US working with teams and individuals in many different sports and performance areas. My experience in gaelic football, camogie, handball, education, and my work has taught me that your mind can either help or hinder your performance and that is why I have developed this resource; to help handball players, coaches, and anyone involved in these sports to maximize their performance and enjoyment of what they do on and off the court.

For information on individual and team work, you can contact me at info@thespaceinbetween.co

You can also find more information on my website: www.thespaceinbetween.co

What is Sport Psychology?

Sport Psychology looks at how what we think and feel impacts what we do.

For example:

- I feel motivated to improve my back-wall shot so I spend an extra 10 minutes practising this skills after every training session.
- I am distracted, so I mishit a ball that I would usually hit.

Sport Psychology implements tools that will help you build mental skills and impact your performance in a helpful way (Williams & Krane, 2015).

For example: Having a pre-performance routine can help you focus and remain consistent before taking a serve st a crucial moment in a game.

No matter your age or level, all performances place the performer under a certain level of stress or pressure.

Sport Psychology can help you perform your best even when feeling stress or pressure.

How can Sport Psychology help you in the court?

Sport Psychology can serve every single handball player from the aspiring All-Ireland Champion to the club player looking to get fitter, to the underage player still finding their place within the sport.

If I were to ask you if you would like to be more motivated, more confident, more focused, have the ability to control your energy, and overcome your mistakes, I'm sure you would say 'yes'.

We often ask athletes who achieve greatness: "What were you thinking?" or "How did you do it?".

Often these athletes speak about the motivation they had from a young age, the confidence they felt, how they imagined themselves being successful, and how they were able to overcome their nerves under pressure. These are all in reference to the mental aspect of performance in sport and in performances in general.

Just like we train to prepare for the physical aspect of performances, sport psychology can help athletes prepare for the psychological aspects of performance.

When we reach a certain level, the physical differences between players is probably minimal and it comes down to who can hold their nerve, who can stick to a plan, and who can stay focused. The mental side is crucial to performance.

Without motivation, confidence, focus, and self-regulation, achieving your desired performance is impossible.

How can Sport Psychology help you outside the court?

There is no separating who we are on and off the court. Sport impacts life and life impacts sport.

Every single player, manager, or official within the GAA has another aspect to their lives as well. For example, a player has to go to work the day after a game.

Some examples of how Sport Psychology can benefit you on or off the court are:

- Build focus to take to school or work.
- Help you find your motivation to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Help you set purposeful goals based on your motivations.
- Help you feel confident in performances (playing or public speaking, for example).
- Help you develop strategies to overcome challenges such as mistakes, losses, and stress that we encounter in everyday life.

A win or a loss doesn't just stay on the field or in the court. An issue at work or at home doesn't just stay at work or at home. But these are all places where you need to be focused on the task at hand.

We don't want to be in the court thinking about something that happened at work or at work thinking about a match we lost at the weekend or spending time with our families and wondering what if I had kicked that ball over the bar.

To focus solely on the player would be unjust. Sport Psychology can help individuals improve motivation, be confident, stay focused, control their energy, and overcome challenges. While these skills are important in sport, they are not exclusive to it. These skills are helpful in every walk of life such as school, work, relationships, and ever day activities.





The Get A-Head Program

The Get A-Head Program encompasses 5 core mental skills: Awareness, Motivation, Focus, Confidence, and the Ability to Overcome Challenges.



Within each section, 3 core questions are explored:

- What is this Mental Skill?
- Why should I develop it?
- How can I develop it?

Each mental skill is accompanied by a mental tool and PDF that player's can use to develop that mental skill.

All of the information and resources in this booklet are based on and supported by previous research.



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BUILD AWARENESS

"Awareness is the first step to gaining control in any pressure situation"
- Ken Ravizza



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AWARENESS



Why should you build awareness?

To make any adjustment, you must first be aware of the current situation.

Most sportspeople have big goals but without without knowing where you currently are, it is unlikely that you will make that goal a reality.

The most successful people in sport, business, school, and life are constantly asking themselves:

- Where am I?
- Where do I want to go?
- How can I get there?

What should you be aware of?

1. Your Motivation:

Knowing your motivation will help you sustain your drive and work-ethic even on the toughest days.

Handball can be a lonely sport. You spend hours and hours training alone and traveling for training games to make some progress. Unlike team sports, there is often no manager, trainer, or team-mates to hold you accountable. It is up to you to find your motivation to become the best version of yourself.

Without knowing why you do what you do, you may reach a stage when you question why you are putting so much time into your sport and lack the drive to keep striving for more.

2. Your Best Performance:

The goal of any performer is to deliver their best performance consistently but are you aware of when you perform your best?

Knowing when you perform your best will help you deliver that performance more consistently.

- Do you know when you perform your best? What are you thinking, saying, and feeling before, during, and after your best performances?
- Do you know when you don't perform your best? What are you thinking, saying, and feeling before, during, and after your not-so-good performances?

3. How You Deal With Challenges in Your Sport:

Challenges are a part of life and a part of sport. The ability to overcome these challenges are crucial to success.

Some challenges that you may face on the court are nerves, mistakes, and defeat.

There is no such thing as a perfect game. With such a quick turnaround between the end of a rally and the next serve, the ability to let go of a mistake and focus on the next point could be difference between winning and losing.

Being aware of how you deal with challenges will help you decide if you need to develop new strategies going forward.

4. What other aspects of my life effect my performance?

What happens on the court impacts what happens off the court. What happens off the court impacts what happens on the court.

You have to cope with balancing high performances in sport, work/school, and in your personal life. All of these can add stress to y our life and can have a huge impact on your sporting performance.

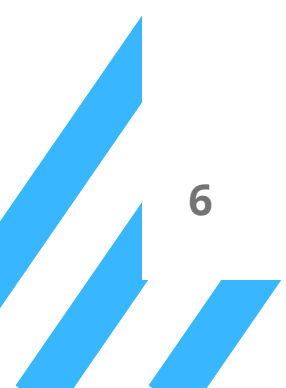
- How do you balance these aspects of your life?
- Do you realize when you are focused on something else?
- Do you feel like you can focus on the right thing at the right time?

Being aware of what is impacting your performance will help you make decisions and achieve balance going forward.



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IF YOU KNOW YOU KNOW



1.What Motivates Me?

2. When Do I Perform My Best?

3. How Do I Deal With Challenges?

4. What Are Some Other Aspects Of My life That Effect My Performance?



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FIND YOUR RECIPE TO SUCCESS



What is the Recipe to Success?

Research shows that each and every sports person has their own optimal performance zone or 'recipe to success'. This means that to perform their best, players like to feel a certain way, to think about certain things, and to say certain things to get in the zone. This varies from player to player and from sport to sport.

Think about some players you know. I have seen players who are comfortable chatting to their friends before games and having a laugh while others need to block others out by listening to music and sitting alone. Some players like to think about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it while others like to be distracted. Neither approach is better than the other but it highlights that each individual has their own 'Recipe to Success'.

Why do I want to be aware of my Recipe to Success?

The goal for most handball players is to consistently perform at their best or close to their best. With tournaments every few weeks, it is crucial to be able to replicate your best performances and this would be impossible to do without understanding when you perform your best and what contributes to that performance.

What is the purpose of a cooking recipe?

When cooking, we use a recipe to help us create the same dish repeatedly. The recipe tells us what we need so we don't waste time guessing and trying to figure it out. You get what you need and nothing goes to waste. Without the recipe, we wouldn't know how to achieve what we want. We might use ingredients that don't help us and we get a completely different result than what we set out for.

To perform consistently, we need to prepare with consistency. Becoming aware of what makes you play your best and building your own recipe, will help you achieve your best performance on a consistent basis. It will highlight what feelings, thoughts, and sayings that help you and make you aware of those ingredients that are unhelpful.

How can I build my Recipe to Success?

1. See it: *If you can't see it, you can't be it.*

- Think back on your most successful performance, one when you felt really good, you felt like everything was going your way.
- Take yourself back to before the performance began....

2. Find your ingredients:

- In your own words try and describe it and see it in as much detail as you can.
- These questions will help you...

- Before the performance...
 - What was it (training, competition)?
 - What were you wearing?
 - What were you thinking before your performance?
 - What were you saying to yourself?
 - What did you feel?
- During the performance..
 - What were you thinking during your performance?
 - What were you saying to yourself?
 - What did you feel?

3. Create Your Recipe:

- This is when you build your own Recipe to Success.
- Look at what you were thinking, feeling, saying...
- How can you replicate those thoughts, feelings, and sayings?



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RECIPE TO SUCCESS



1. See it:

2. Find your ingrediants:

<p>Before: What were you feeling?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>During: What were you feeling?</p>	<p>Before: What were you thinking?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>During: What were you thinking?</p>	<p>Before: What were you saying?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>During What were you saying?</p>
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3. Create your Recipe to Success:

What can you do achieve your best performance more frequently?

To replicate my Recipe to Success I can...

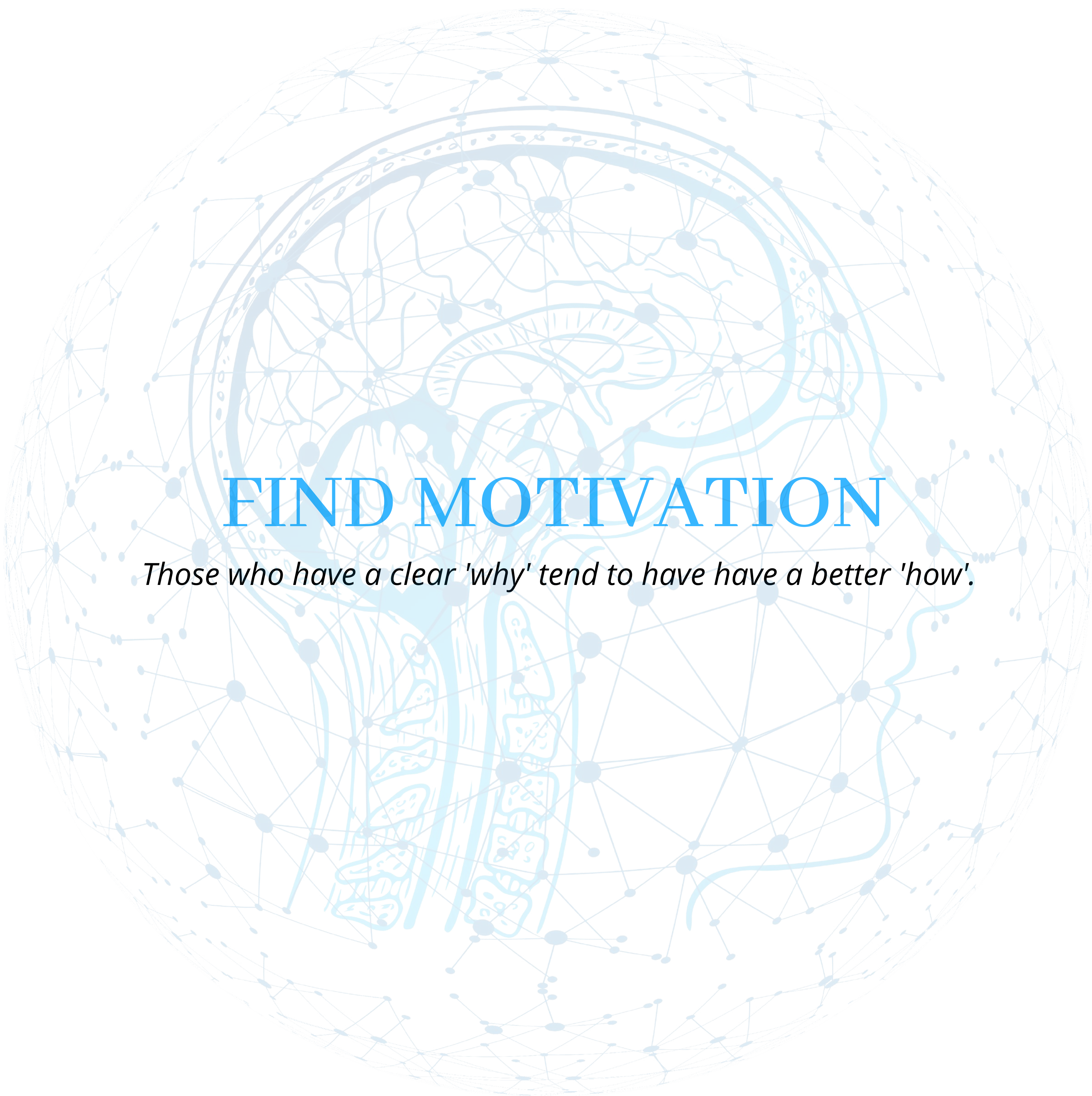
Example: I can develop my ability to relax when I feel nervous...

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FIND MOTIVATION

Those who have a clear 'why' tend to have a better 'how'.



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MOTIVATION



What is Motivation?

Motivation is the drive or intention of an individual in their performance. Essentially, motivation is the reason a player trains or competes.

There are 3 types of motivation: amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation.

- Amotivation implies that an athlete feels no desire to participate and is unsure as to why they participate.
- Extrinsic motivation means that an athlete is driven by external rewards and, in some cases, feel like they have to play.
- Intrinsic motivation means that an athlete chooses to participate for the enjoyment of the sport or love of the game.

Naturally, many of us are motivated by extrinsic factors such as winning titles, being recognized, and breaking records.

In a sport like handball, the season is long and training can be very isolated, intrinsic motivation is optimal for maintaining drive and focus throughout a season or a career.

Why Do You Need to Know Your Motivation?

Knowing if you are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated will help you set goals and keep going during a long season.

You can have a mix of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is ideal as we will continue to play and develop because we just love it.

Extrinsic motivators such as titles and rewards can help us keep going when we really don't feel like going down to the court alone or looking for that extra training game. There are times when you won't be in the mood for training, and it will seem easy to stay at home and leave it until tomorrow. These are times when extrinsic factors can help us. For example; when we don't feel like training, during a long season when we start to wonder 'what's the point?', or during a tough game when we are tired. At these moments, extrinsic motivators such as winning can help us keep going.

How Can You Find Your Motivation?

If you have kept playing this sport for many years, I am sure there is a reason.

In handball, it can be easy to get caught up in the competitive aspect and forget what got you to where you are today and why you are playing.

Ask yourself:

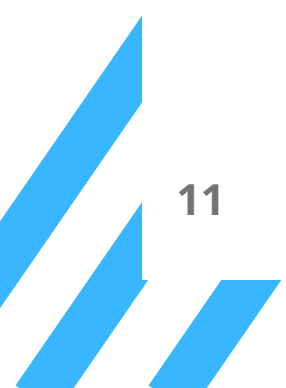
- Why did I start playing handball?
- Is this still why I play?
- What do I love about this sport?
- Why do I play now?

Answer these questions and remind yourself of your 'Why' whenever you start to feel like you lack in motivation.



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WHY THOUGH?

Why Did I Start Playing Handball?

Is This The Reason I Still Play?

Why do I like Handball Now?

Why Do I Play Handball Now?

Intrinsic Motivation



Extrinsic Motivation



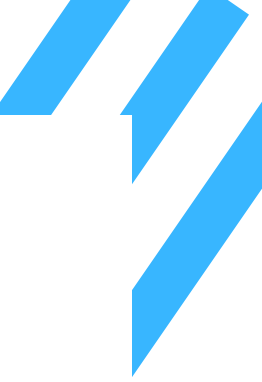
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GOAL SETTING



What is Goal Setting?

Think of goal setting as the Google maps of sport. It is easy to have the end in mind, but without a map to guide you, getting there will be a lot more difficult. Setting purposeful goals maps out a route to help you get to your desired destination.

There are 3 types of goals involved in effective goal-setting: Big, Little, and Tiny (BLT).

- Big Goals: *This is your desired destination.*
 - Where do you want to end up?
 - What do you want to achieve at the end of the season or at the end of your career?
- Little Goals: *These are the steps you need to take to get to your destination.*
 - You know where you want to go, but what do you need to make that possible?
 - Little goals relate to aspects of your performance that you need to develop to achieve your big goal. This goes beyond the physical aspect of the sport.
 - Think of everything that impacts your performance - sleep, diet, fitness, mindset, etc.
- Tiny Goals: *These are the little steps we can take each and every day to improve aspect of your performance.*
 - Process goals break down your little goals and make them specific to help you achieve them.

*Notice how Google Maps sometimes takes you the back roads or the most awkward way possible? You will have to readjust your little and tiny goals to achieve your big goals.

Why Should You Use Goal Setting to Maintain Motivation?

Take your points and the goals will come" - Every GAA manager ever.

It's an ironic saying at this stage but it is true. The little things add up to the big results.

Sometimes it can be difficult to assess our development towards a goal if it is long-term. For example: If your big goal is to win the All-Ireland Championship, you won't know if you have achieved that until the end of the season. How will you know you are making the right progress during the many months that you are training before that?

Having little and tiny goals that you can work on every day will help you feel like you are making progress in that time. The big goal will motivate you to keep doing those little things even when you don't feel like it.

How Can You Set Purposeful Goals?

This is where awareness comes in. Are you aware of what you want to achieve? Are you aware of how you can achieve that? Are you aware of what you can do to achieve it?

You can use the worksheet on the next page to plan your own BLT goals.

- Big Goals: This will be the easiest goal to set. Big goals should inspire you but also be achievable.
- Little Goals: You need to be aware of your strengths and weaknesses.
Ask yourself: - What do I do well already? What are some areas of my performances that I can improve to take me toward my Big Goals?
- Tiny Goals: These need to be specific. Tiny goals will relate to you Little goals.
Look at your little goals and ask: What can I do to achieve this improvement in this performance area?

Pro Tip: Ideally, you will have 1-3 tiny goals to achieve each little goal. It would be overwhelming to focus on all of these during each training session. Pick 1-3 tiny goals to focus on during each training session.



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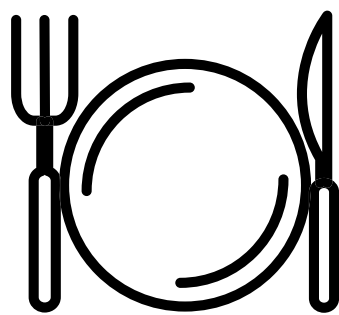
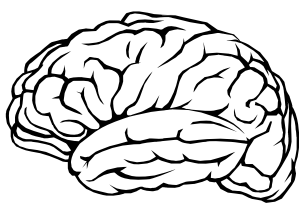
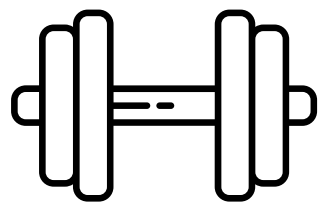
BLT GOAL SETTING



Big Goal:

What do you want to see at the end of the season?

-
-
-



Little Goals:

What aspects of your performance can be improved to help reach your Big Goal?

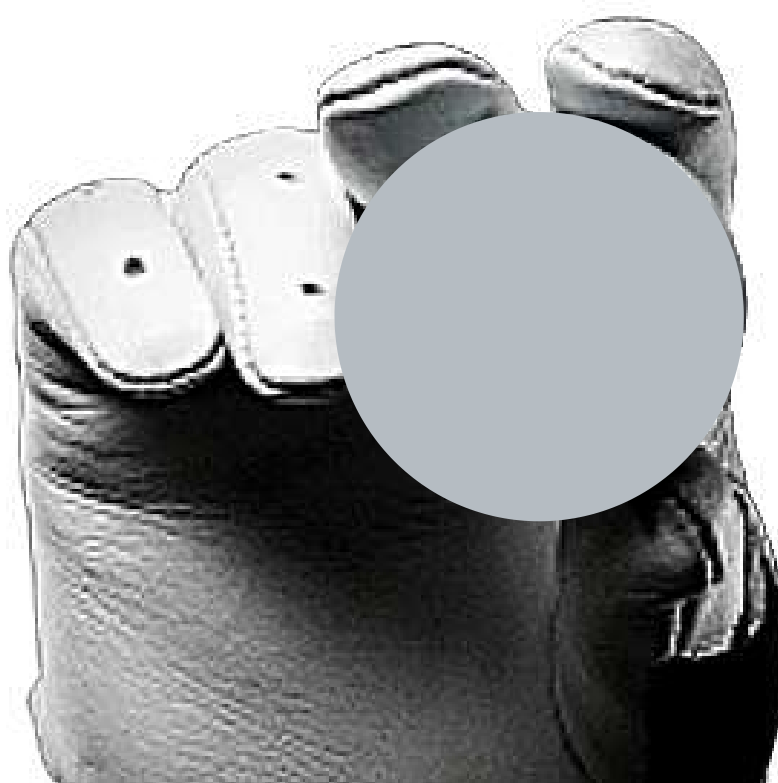
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Tiny Goals:

What can you do everyday to improve your little goals?

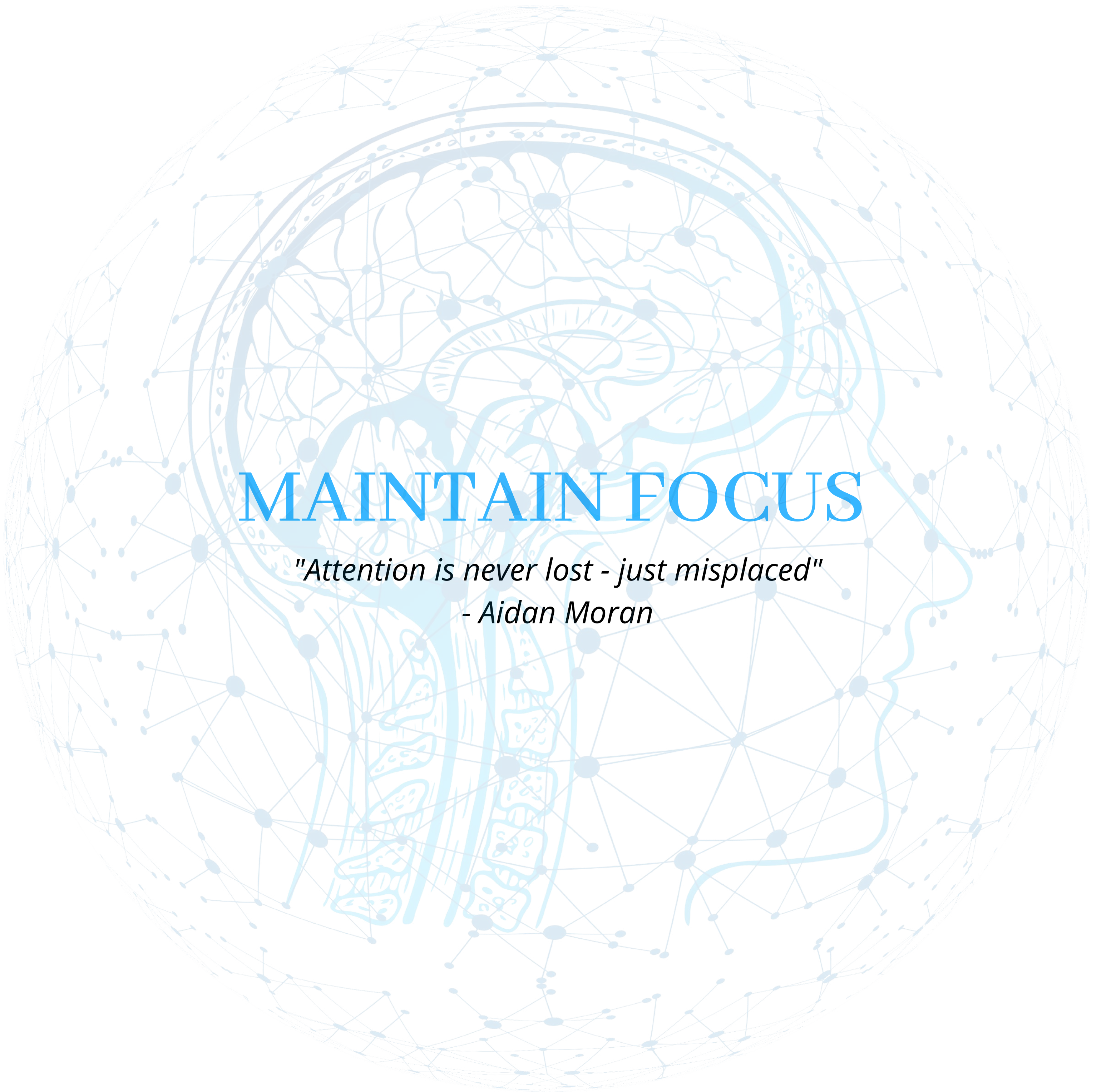
Example:

- Little goal: Improve back wall kill.
- Tiny goals: Practise this shot twice a week, do footwork drills once a week, ask a training partner to serve to the backwall.



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MAINTAIN FOCUS

"Attention is never lost - just misplaced"
- Aidan Moran



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FOCUS



What is Focus?

Focus is the ability we have to concentrate at any given moment. Being such a fast-paced game, that can change in a rally, focus is crucial to success in handball.

After games, we often hear players say, 'I just lost focus' or 'I got distracted.' But the truth is, we are always focused on something, but maybe not the right thing. It is natural for your mind to wander momentarily. A lapse in focus will only cost you if it lasts a long time, and you can't control your focus.

While there are many things in sport that we can not control, focus is something that is within our control.

Why is it Important to Maintain Focus?

Many things that take our focus away from what's important are things that are in the past or in the future. Most of these are things we can not control.

Thinking about the past is important to help us grow. But in a game, it is not helpful to dwell on mistakes, on things that we have done well, or on uncontrollable factors like a bad call from the referee or someone sitting in the crowd. These things take our attention away from what's important now.

Thinking about the future is important as it gives us motivation and purpose, but within a performance, you can only affect the future by attending to the present moment. By focusing on the present, you can lead yourself to the ideal future outcome.

Remember: We all get distracted from time to time. It's ok to get distracted. You can regain focus using a simple mental tool.

How Can You Maintain Focus?

The **Fly Mindset** will help you become aware of what has distracted you, let go of that distraction, and bring your focus to where it needs to be.

The Fly Mindset is a 3 step process:

1. Find Your Focus:

- To make this easier, ask yourself:
 - "What distracts me from handball?"
 - "What am I focused on right now?"
 - "Is this helpful to me right now?"

Becoming aware of some distractions that affect you will make it easier for you to identify in a game when you only have a few seconds between points.

2. Let it Go:

- To let it go, draw attention to your breath. Notice the rate of your breathing as you inhale and exhale.
- Do you feel steady?
- Tip: Count your breath. This will immediately bring your attention to the present moment as you focus on counting in and out.

Box Breathing will help you here. This means your inhale and exhale are the same length. 4x4 is ideal between points. Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds and exhale through the mouth for 4 seconds.

3. You Decide What To Focus On:

- This will depend on the moment you have been distracted and what is important to focus on.
- Ask Yourself:
 - "Is this thought helpful to my performance?"
 - "What do I want to focus on right now?"

For example: If you notice you are distracted before training, ask yourself:

- 'Is this helpful right now?"
- If the answer is 'No', ask "What do I need to focus on?".
- In this moment, think of your process goals and what you need to focus on in training: return of serve, moving your feet, and staying calm.

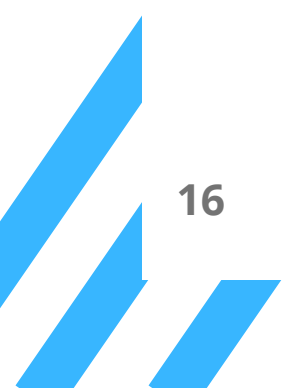
These questions can be used before training, before a game, in a game, and after a game.

Distractions happen all the time so be prepared to deal with them when they do.



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What are You Focused On?

What are some things that distract you from / during training?

What are some things that distract you from / during games?



F

Find Your Focus

What am I focused on?

Is this helpful right now?

L

Let It Go

- Draw attention to your breath.
- Box Breathing: Inhale through your nose for 4, exhale through your mouth for 4.
- Imagine the distraction leaving your body as you exhale, and inhale your focus point

Y

You Decide What To Focus On

What do I want to focus on right now?





CULTIVATE CONFIDENCE

*"If you think you can do a thing or you think you can't do a thing, you're right."
- Henry Ford*



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CONFIDENCE



What is Confidence?

Confidence refers to a player's belief that they can achieve success. Being confident does not mean you are sure you will win, but you believe that you can do what is required to perform well.

Similar to physical skills, confidence can be developed. Confidence will not be high all the time, but we can use the tools below to build our confidence when it is challenged.

Why is it Important to Build Confidence?

Self-confidence is proven to have a linear relationship with performance. Confident players are proven to be able to deal with the stress of competition more effectively and perform well under pressure (Creswell & Hodge, 2004).

Confidence can reduce pre-competition nerves and allow you to challenge them with helpful thoughts.
Confidence can help you during a game to go for shots and to continue to do so even if things aren't going so well.

Confidence might not completely get rid of nerves or doubts, but it can help us challenge those doubts if they do arise.
For example: If a player thinks, "I feel nervous about my ability to win today." A confident player can challenge that with "I have done the training, I know what to do."

How Can You Build Confidence?

There are four ways we can develop confidence and 'Kill It' (Vealey & Vearnau, 2013).

1. Know Your Strengths:

- Thinking about your strengths and past achievements will help you build and maintain confidence. It is human nature to remember the mistakes we made and the losses we endure, but you can focus on the things you have done and are doing well to improve your confidence.

Ask yourself:

- What have I done to prepare for this?
- What have I achieved in the past?
- What are the strengths of my game?

2. Ignite Your Mind:

- You can either control your mind or your mind can control you.
- 'Ignite Your Mind' focuses on developing your mindset and using mental skills training to build your confidence.
- Use can use this booklet to 'Ignite Your Mind' and develop strategies to use your mind to help you.
- The fact that you are engaging in this booklet shows that you are taking steps to make your mindset a strength.

3. Lift Yourself:

- Often it is easy to give advice to others and lift others when we see them with their head down. And often, we aren't so nice to ourselves.
- The same way what you say can pick someone up or make them feel worse, what you say to yourself can hugely impact your performance.
- Often in handball, there isn't a coach nearby to give you words of encouragement. By thinking about what you are saying to yourself and choosing your words carefully, you can learn to lift yourself in those moments.

Tips for Self-Talk:

- Think of something a coach once said to you that made you feel confident.
- What would you say to another player to help them feel confident?
- Say these things to yourself.

4. Look It:

- "You look good, you play good", "Fake it 'til you make it."
- Research shows that strong body language makes you look and feel more confident (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010).
- Think about when you are on the court, and someone looks super confident... How does that affect you?
- Seeing powerful body language can be intimidating and make you feel like that person can play well regardless of the current situation.
- By demonstrating powerful body language, you can not only make yourself feel more confident, but your opponent will notice, and maybe you will get in their head as well.

How to look it:

- Head up
- Eyes forward
- Shoulders back
- Chest out
- Feet shoulder width apart
- Big stance



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KILL IT!

K

Know Your Strenghts

What are your past achievements?

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What are the strenghts in your game?

I

Ignite Your Mind

What mental skills have you developed or are you developing?

L

Lift Yourself

What will you say to yourself when you need a confidence boost?

L

Look It

How and When can you implement powerful body language?





OVERCOME CHALLENGES

It's not about what happens to you, it's about how you respond to what happens to you.

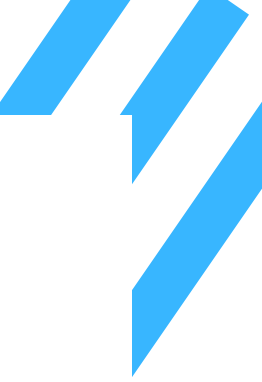


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OVERCOME NERVES



Nerves Are Energy:

One way to think about the feeling of being nervous is that nerves are energy. We feel a certain way, we think a certain way, and we say 'I'm nervous'.

Nervous energy is the physical and mental response we have when we feel nervous before a game.

Some examples of nervous energy are:

- Physical: increase in heart rate, butterflies in the stomach, maybe a little weak in the legs.
- Mental: self-doubt, worry, or thinking about the outcome.

We all have different nervous energy that can effect our physical game and our mentality.

Some questions that might arise are: What if I haven't trained enough? What if I play like last time? What if I lose?

Those what-ifs are different for everyone, and the effect of nervous energy on performances is different for everyone as well.

Some people see nerves as their body and minds way of saying they are ready, and they use it in their favour. Others, not so much.

Why do we get Nervous Energy?

We get nervous when we are anticipating a challenge that we care about. In sport, we put a lot of work into it, and we want to do well.

We are performing in front of people, and we want to show what we can do.

Big competitions or finals are examples of occasions that can induce nervous energy as it may be something we have been focused on for a long time, and when it comes around, we want to reach our goal. This anticipation and knowing the amount of work we have put in can cause us to get nervous. This is completely natural.

How can we use Nervous Energy to help us?

Energy is Energy. Energy can either be helpful or unhelpful to your performance.

The key question you need to be aware of and explore is: **Do I need to Use it or Lose it?**

Before answering this question, you want to become aware of your physical and mental response to nervous energy.

- Physical:
 - Does it make you feel uneasy and shaky?
 - Or, does it help your body feel ready and excited?
- Mental:
 - Do you start to doubt yourself?
 - Or, do you tell yourself you perform your best when you feel that nervous energy?

(Use the worksheet on the next page to answer these questions).

Once you become aware of this, you can decide to Use it or Lose it. Each section provides one tool that can help you if your response to nervous energy is physical or mental. You can decide based on your answers to the questions on the worksheet, which tool will be most helpful to you.



THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

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USE IT OR LOSE IT



Think of a time you have been nervous in the past...

When were you nervous?

Why were you nervous?

How did it effect you physically?

Before the performance:

During the performance:

How did it effect you mentally?

Before the performance:

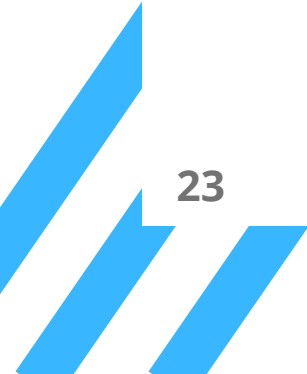
During the performance:

How unhelpful - helpful do you think nervous energy is to your performance?

0: Unhelpful

5: It's Grand

10: Helpful





STRATEGIES TO USE IT OR LOSE IT



Once you become aware of whether nervous energy helps or hinders your performance, you can use the strategies below to 'use it' or 'lose it'.

USE IT:

1. Self-talk (to help you mentally use it).

- Tell yourself how that nervous energy helps you.
- You can reframe thoughts by becoming aware of them and choosing how you want to proceed.
 - For example:
 - You say: "I feel nervous about this game"
 - Tell yourself: "I perform my best when I feel nervous"

2. Power Breaths (to help you physically use it).

- We can use our breath to increase or decrease our energy levels.
- Power breaths are effective as they get our heart rate up and help us feel pumped for a performance.
 - Inhale slowly through the nose, and exhale powerfully through the mouth.
 - Pair this with a high-tempo warm-up and you will feel that energy rise.

LOSE IT:

1. Self-talk (to help you mentally lose it).

- Just like we can use our self-talk to get pumped, we can also decrease our nervous energy using self-talk.
- Reframing can help you challenge that nervous energy and reassure yourself that you are ready.
 - For example:
 - You say: "I can't perform when I feel nervous"
 - Tell yourself: "The hard work is done. I have done it before, I can do it again".

2. Calming Breath (to help you physically lose it).

- Our breathing has a huge effect of the physical response of our bodies. By extending our breath, we can enhance the feeling of relaxation and feel calm going into a performance.
- What to do:
 - Inhale for 5 (through the nose).
 - Hold for 2.
 - Exhale for 7.
 - The extended exhale is important to decrease the reaction we have to nervous energy.



THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

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OVERCOME MISTAKES



What Is A Mistake?

A mistake is an error in our performance. A mis-take, a single error in a single moment. A mistake is an outcome that we did not want.

Why Do Mistakes Happen?

Let's get one thing straight, mistakes will happen.

With handball being such a fast paced game in which every single rally is important, errors are going to happen.

Mistakes happen due to many reasons:

- A lapse in focus
- Fatigue
- Emotions (anger, frustration, excitement, etc.)
- The opponent's shot
- A call from the ref

There are many more reasons that mistakes will happen.

The fact is that mistakes will happen. Knowing this is crucial to being prepared to overcome them

Overcoming Mistakes V Overcoming A Mistake:

It can be easy to think 'ah that was just one mistake, i'll be ok for the next one', but if the next one leads to another mistake, then suddenly we've made two mistakes and the impact can start to build up.

By dealing with one mistake at a time, we minimize the impact that mistakes have on our performance and we can refocus on what's important in that moment.

How Can You Overcome a Mistake?

Routines are proven to help athletes reset and refocus in high-pressure situations.

Having a routine specific to mistakes can increase your ability to move forward and minimize the effect of a mistake.

The NBA Mindset:

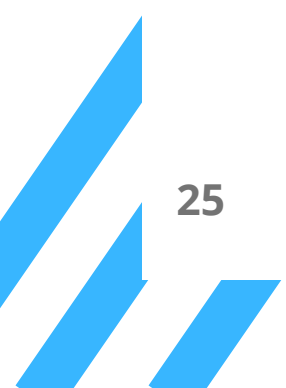
The NBA mindset will help you see and overcome one mistake at a time rather than seeing all your mistakes and letting them overcome you as you perform.

By telling yourself its No Bother At all, you can choose to bounce back rather than seeing mistakes as a huge issue that drag you down.



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SEE MISTAKES AS 'NBA'.



How Do I Develop the NBA Mindset to Bounce Back?

Developing the NBA mindset to bounce back is a 3-step process similar to the FLY mindset to control your focus as you Notice where your focus is, Breathe, and Act. The difference is that NBA is specific to mistakes which is crucial to be able to move on.

1. Notice where your focus is.

- Ask yourself:
 - What am I focused on?
 - Is it helpful to my performance?

2. Breathe:

- To let it go, draw attention to your breath.
- Notice the rate of your breathing as you inhale and exhale.
 - Tip: Count your breath and imagine the mistake leaving you. This will immediately bring your attention to the present-moment as you focus on counting in and out.
 - *Box Breathing* technique:
 - This means your inhale and exhale are the same length.
 - 4x4 would be ideal for between drills or plays.
 - Inhale through your nose for 4 and exhale through the mouth for 4.

3. Act:

- This is the most important step in bouncing back from a mistake.
- To act, you will develop a cue specific to moving on from a mistake.
 - A cue is a visual, verbal, or physical guide that will redirect you to what's important now.
 - You can use a combination of visual, verbal, and physical cues if you want.

The Sample NBA:

1. Notice where your focus is.

- What am I focused on?
 - I am focused on the back-wall shot I missed.
- Is this helpful to my performance?
 - No.

2. Breathe:

- I draw my attention to my breathe and count 4 seconds in, 4 seconds out.
- I keep my attention here.
- As I exhale I imagine the mistake leaving me and staying in the past.

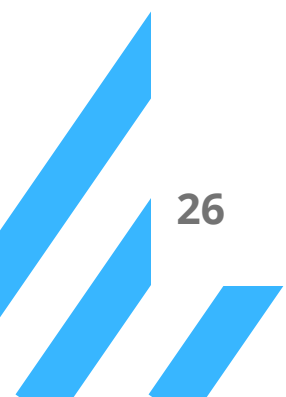
3. Act:

- I choose to act now.
- I pull up my gloves (physical cue) and I tell myself "Strong return and move" (verbal cue).



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NO BOTHER AT ALL



What is your reaction?

How do you react to mistakes?

Do some mistakes effect you more than others?



N

Notice

What am I focused on?

Is this helpful right now?

B

Breath

- Draw attention to your breathe.
- Box Breathing: Inhale through your nose for 4, exhale through your mouth for 4.
- Imagine leaving the mistake where it happened.. in the past.

A

ACT

What cue will your use to reset?



THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

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OVERCOME DEFEAT

BY

PROCESSING YOUR PERFORMANCE

What Is Processing Your Performance?

Processing performances means reflecting on your performance holistically. We often label our performances as 'good' or 'bad'. We say 'I played well' or 'I was terrible today.' Statements such as these are not at all helpful to your growth as a player or as a person.

In every single performance, there are at least 3 things we did well and 3 things that could have been better. By processing performances, we see things that went well even when we feel like we played poorly, and we see things that need to be improved even when we feel unstoppable.

Why Should You Process Your Performances?

What would you say about a primary school teacher who graded their student's tests with one word: 'Pass' or 'Fail.' What would you say about that teacher? Are they helping their students?

When we label our own handball performances as 'good' or 'bad,' we are the same as that teacher. We are failing ourselves when we fail to Dig Deeper and process performances.

Digging Deeper is essentially providing your own handball games with feedback and corrections. We can draw attention to things we did well, and we can point out areas of improvement. Every student and every handball player has an area that can be improved or an area that they are excellent at.

By Digging Deeper, you can be your own favourite teacher and ensure that a loss does not defeat you. You can see more than a win or a loss, you can see an opportunity for growth.

How Can You Dig Deeper and Process Your Performances?

Digging Deeper means asking yourself questions after each performance to assess your physical and mental performance in depth and make a decision about how to progress going forward.

Questions that will help you Dig Deeper:

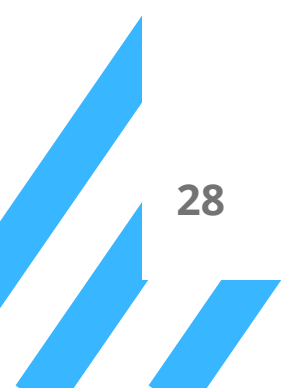
1. Rate your physical and mental performance from 1-10 (This is very general).
2. Think about what you did well and what could be improved (Remember, within every game, there are at least 3 things you did well and 3 things that can be improved.).
3. Decide how you can adjust and build on those areas that didn't go so well for you. What will you do?

Remember, the only time we fail after defeat is when we fail to learn from it.



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Rate Your Physical Performance:

Rate Your Mental Performance:

What can be improved?

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