

MENTAL PREPARATION TECHNIQUES



**Imagery**

Imagery is the creation of pictures in our minds. Sometimes it is used to get the feeling of movement or capture an emotional feeling.

1. Improves concentration by blocking out distractions
2. Can increase confidence by imagining success or satisfaction with the performance
3. Can help with relaxation before or during the performance or control stress

*"When I train, one of the things I concentrate on is creating a mental picture of how best deliver the ball to a teammate, preferably leaving him alone in front of the rival goalkeeper. So what I do, always before a game, always, every night and every day, is try and think up things, imagine plays, which no one else will have thought of, and to do so always bearing in mind the particular strength of each team-mate to whom I am passing the ball. When I construct those plays in my mind I take into account whether one team-mate likes*



**Mental Rehearsal**

Mental rehearsal involves both internal and external imagery.

Internal imagery is imagining yourself doing the activity and simulate the feelings of the activity

External imagery is imagining yourself from outside your body (like watching yourself on film) to complete the activity.

Mental rehearsal can help by:

- Speeding up reactions
- Better concentration and focus
- Control arousal levels and keep you calm
- Motivates you and encourages positivity

An internal imagery example would be a bobsleigh driver visualising themselves in the sleigh completing each turn, feeling what the speed and the turns would be like:

An external imagery example would be a F1 driver imagining a car on the track and watching it drive the route they are going to complete.



**Selective attention**

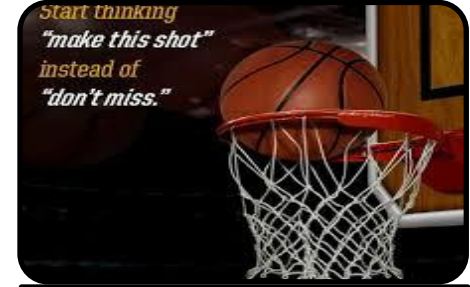
Selective attention is used to block out distractions around you. It also helps you to focus on the **IMPORTANT ASPECTS** of the task/activity you need to do.

When performing an activity there are always external factors that can distract you, for example the crowd and other players. As an athlete you need to learn to block these out and focus solely on what you need to do.

Selective attention helps by:

1. Concentration on the task ahead
2. Focus on the important aspects of what is about to happen
3. Enables better decision making to take place

When a shooter in netball is going for the goal, they are able to block out all of the crowds shouting and cheering, other opponents talking to them to get them to miss and the defenders in front of them. The only thing they are concentration on is the ball going through the net. Nothing else.



**Positive thinking**

Positive thinking is mainly about about 3 things, and is often known as the 'SELF TALK' technique:

1. Being confident to do well
2. Shutting out negative thoughts about failure in competition
3. feeling well prepared for competition

It helps by:

1. Improving motivation
2. Improving confidence
3. Improving performance
4. Decrease anxiety and calm you down

A footballer taking a penalty will stand before the ball and think "I am going to score this in the top corner". They are positive in their thoughts and have no doubt in their mind they are going to score. Sometimes however doubt comes into the mind and negative thoughts creep in. This decreases chance of success.