Controlling Your Emotions
5-Step Technique

Playing your sport with emotion is generally a good thing. However, too much emotion can make you feel and act in ways that negatively affect your performance in your sport, as well as in your life.

You Can Take Control of Your Emotions

Do you ever feel nervous, afraid, or anxious? Do you ever get overly upset? Do these emotions ever affect your performance? These emotions can control you -- but only if you allow them to. Learn the 5-Step Technique to Controlling Your Emotions to help take control of your emotions and improve your performance in your sport and life.

5-Step Technique to Controlling Your Emotions

STEP 1. PHYSICAL FOCUS - focus solely on your physical state

STEP 2. BREATHE - take a deep breath

STEP 3. RELAX - contract and then relax all your muscles

STEP 4. VISUALIZE - imagine yourself in a relaxing scene

STEP 5. REFOCUS - by visualizing a sport technique & giving yourself a positive command

STEP 1. PHYSICAL FOCUS

PHYSICAL FOCUS has you mentally “step back” from the emotional situation you find yourself in and to focus solely on your physical state. The purpose is to retrain your brain to stop you from entering into an emotional downward spiral.

HOW: Turn all your attention to your physical state. Notice your heart rate, your breathing, and how your muscles feel.

PRACTICE: First imagine a stressful situation in your sport and then step back from the situation in your mind and focus solely on how it makes your body feel.
STEP 2. BREATHE

Once you are able to turn your focus to your physical state, you may be in “fight or flight” mode that means different chemicals are pumping through your body causing increased heart rate, shallow breathing, and/or muscle tension. To combat this, you need to take a couple big DEEP BREATHS to help release these chemicals.

HOW: Take a big deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath. Repeat if you have time.

PRACTICE: First imagine a stressful situation in your sport, the practice Step 1 PHYSICAL FOCUS and STEP 2 BREATHE together.

STEP 3. RELAX

Deep breathing will start to break you from “fight or flight” mode, now we need to continue the process by relaxing your tense muscles.

HOW: Contract (make them tight) ALL of your muscles from your forehead down to your toes for a few seconds. Then, relax them all. If any group of muscles are still tense after this, spend a few extra seconds contracting and relaxing that muscle group.

PRACTICE: First imagine a stressful situation in your sport, the practice Step 1 PHYSICAL FOCUS, STEP 2 BREATHE, and STEP 3 RELAX together.

STEP 4. VISUALIZE

Relaxing your muscles should help halt “fight or flight” mode in your body, now we need to continue the process in your mind.

First, think of a nature scene or familiar, happy place that calms you. Write it down here:

Visualize this scene: (A)______________________________________________________________

HOW: Imagine yourself in your selected scene for a few seconds. Actually picture and feel yourself in that environment. Simultaneously, imagine all of the stress of the emotional situation leaving your body.

PRACTICE: First imagine a stressful situation in your sport, the practice Step 1 PHYSICAL FOCUS, STEP 2 BREATHE, STEP 3 RELAX, and STEP 4 VISUALIZE together.
STEP 5. REFOCUS

The last step is REFOCUS. Now that you have cleared your body and mind from “fight or flight” mode, this is how you put yourself into a positive state ready to compete. There are two parts to REFOCUS.

HOW

Part 1: This is done by visualizing a movement/technique in your sport. This should be a good play that you’ve executed in the past or some other focal point for your sport. For example, a basketball player launching a free-throw with perfect follow through resulting in a swish shot or a hitter swinging the bat and making perfect contact.

What will you visualize as part of your Refocus: (B)__________________________________________

Part 2: After visualizing, you need to give yourself a short, positive command to finalize your new state of mind such "Now!" or "Let’s Go!" or "Let’s Do This!" Choose something that will inspire you and get you ready to compete.

What is your short, positive command: (C)_________________________________________________

PRACTICE: Try just your REFOCUS step by visualizing your sport technique and exclaiming your short command together now. Try it a few times.

Next.....Let’s Put Them All Together
Controlling Your Emotions
5-Step Technique

This technique will help you take control of your emotions and improve your performance

STEP 1. PHYSICAL FOCUS
• Mentally “Step Back” and focus solely on your physical state.

STEP 2. BREATHE
• Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

STEP 3. RELAX
• Contract all of your muscles at once from your forehead to your toes for a few seconds, and then relax them all.

STEP 4. VISUALIZE
• Imagine yourself at (A)______________________________ for a few seconds. Actually picture and feel yourself in that environment. Simultaneously, imagine all of the stress of the emotional situation leaving your body.

STEP 5. REFOCUS
• Quickly visualize (B)____________________________________
• Exclaim your positive command (C)____________________________

**Practice this technique daily until it becomes so well known that you can leverage it any time.**

**Then periodically practice it to ensure you don’t forget it when you need it**