

S.T.A.R.S. 2019: SMART TOOLS FOR PERFORMANCE



Just like you train your technical skills every day, it is also essential to practice your mental skills with your coach, sports psychologist, and most importantly, yourself!

You wouldn't show up at an important competition and attempt a jump for the very first time; is it any different to decide "Today I will try being confident for the first time!" at a major event?

Here is a *Smart Tools for Performance* "TOP 10" list of skills and concepts that you might find helpful in training and competition. For each skill, self-rate your mastery on a scale of 1-10, and additionally rank from 1-10 how you would rate the importance of each skill to your own performance.

My skill level **Importance?**

1) Goal Setting

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- Working with your training team to create short- and long-term goals that are SPECIFIC, CHALLENGING and UNDER YOUR CONTROL
- Understanding the difference between PROCESS, MASTERY, and OUTCOME goals

2) Having a Pre- and Post-Performance Routine

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- Getting yourself ready to do your task, then physically and psychologically ending the task and moving on
- Understanding the MENTAL, PHYSICAL, and PSYCHOLOGICAL components to your routine

3) Emotional Regulation

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- Practicing mindfulness and using your emotions as informational feedback

4) Activation and Relaxation

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- Techniques for getting yourself into the 'fired-up' or 'calmed-down' mental state for optimal performance
- Preparing yourself for consistency in your routine

5) Imagery

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- Using your senses to mentally experience your performance

6) Concentration and Attention

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- Being able to focus on the most important information at the right time, every time

7) Confidence

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- Believing in yourself and your abilities; "pre-knowing" you can do it

8) Self-talk

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- Positive self-talk, reminding yourself of specific performance cues, and DESCRIBING rather than JUDGING your performance

9) Effort

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- Appropriately exerting mental and physical energy intended for a specific purpose

10) Committing to Your Plan

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- Dedicating yourself to following through with your performance plan; sticking to your plan under pressure

The antidote to stress is **resilience**

WHAT CAN MENTAL TRAINING DO FOR YOU?

- Improves performance consistency
- Creates effective practice habits
- Enhances motivation
- Fine tunes focus
- Gain the ability to perform in pressure situations

Putting your mindfulness skills into play:

- 1) Observe non-judgementally
- 2) Describe one thing at a time
- 3) Participate effectively

Try "5-4-3-2-1"

The next time you get on the ice to run your program, try this mindfulness and grounding exercise:

1. Name 5 things you can see around you.
2. Name 4 things you can feel ("cold air on my face" or "ice under my blades").
3. Name 3 things you can hear right now ("coaches, breathing, crowd, teammates, music").
4. Name 2 things you can smell right now (or 2 things you like the smell of).
5. Name 1 good thing about yourself.

(Adapted from: www.iblifo.org/rcip//copingskills.html).

<p>Observe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice without getting caught up in the experience • Be like a guard at the palace gate: ALERT to everything that comes through your mind • Notice exactly what you are doing; use all your senses – eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue 	<p>Non-judgementally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe by focusing on the "what" – don't characterize things as "good" or "bad" • Accept each moment for what it is – you can find things both helpful and unhelpful, but don't judge them • When you find yourself judging, DON'T JUDGE YOUR JUDGING
<p>Describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge thoughts and feelings but putting them into words • Describe to yourself what is happening: call a thought just a thought and a feeling just a feeling without getting caught up in the content 	<p>One thing at a time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do one thing at a time: when you are eating, eat; when you are skating, skate; when you are competing, compete • As other actions, thoughts and feelings come to you, let them go and practice refocusing on what you are doing • If you find you are doing two things at once, go back and refocus on one thing at a time
<p>Participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become one with your experience in that moment, forgetting everything else • Be a skilled athlete by doing what is needed in each situation • Practice, practice, practice your mental skills and accepting yourself and your situation, and reacting appropriately, until these skills become automatic 	<p>Effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on what works so you know what to do what needs to be done • Act skillfully to the situation you are experiencing, not the situation "you wish you were in" • Remember your objectives and act in the situation to achieve them • Let go of stress and anger that hurts your process