



Mental Imagery

Mental Imagery: Mental Imagery is a *mental experience* that mimics a *real experience*. Mental Imagery is using your imagination to rehearse and practice plays, skills, situations, and events.

Why & How Imagery Works

- Imagery strengthens the *connection* between the mind and the body.
- An imagery session simulates neuro-muscular commands and cognitive processes that exist when you experience the situations/skills in real life.
- Imagery allows you to practice dealing with *special situations* that you do not experience often, but that you have to be prepared for (i.e., imagine a high-pressure championship situation).
- Imagery allows you to *practice* and mentally reinforce movement patterns. You can become more automatic at well-learned skills, fine-tune newer skills, and create new motor programs (commands) for completely novel skills that you cannot yet perform.

Tips & reminders

- Try to be relaxed at the start of your session: make sure that you can control your imagination.
- Have a clear, concise, and detailed agenda for each session. Plan what you are going to do and when—be detailed so that you are not chaotically making things up as you go. *PLAM!*
- Be complete and accurate:
 - Vividness (involve all the senses)
 - Controllability (control and manipulate movements, make corrections)
 - Perfect Image (create the image you want to physically be able to perform. Rehearse!)
 - Timing (slow-time to real-time)
 - Follow-through (do the movement/ routine/ race/ strategy in it's entirety)
 - Perspective (internal vs. external)
- You do not have to be perfect. It is okay to lose concentration or to make mistakes.
- You may want to integrate music, recorded sounds, touch, smells etc. to enhance the realism.
- Your skill, efficiency, and ability to use imagery will improve with practice...like physical skills
- Schedule you sessions ahead of time so that you adhere to the imagery program.
- Do not fatigue yourself by making sessions to long. 5-10 minutes is great (do more if you can)