

FOCUS FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

14 DAYS OF FOCUS: DEVELOPING MENTAL RESILIENCE & STRENGTH TO PEAK IN GYMNASTICS

Karen Cogan, PhD**
Senior Sport Psychologist
United States Olympic Committee

Christy Halbert, PhD*
Head Coach & President
The Boxing Resource Center



*DR. HALBERT SUPPLIED THE OVERARCHING CONCEPT FOR THIS MANUAL

**CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THIS MANUAL SHOULD BE DIRECTED

TO:

KAREN COGAN, PHD
SPORT PERFORMANCE

1 OLYMPIC PLAZA, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO, 80909

KAREN.COGAN@USOC.ORG

719-866-4722

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY SARA H MITCHELL, MA

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DAY 1 RECALL AND REFOCUS

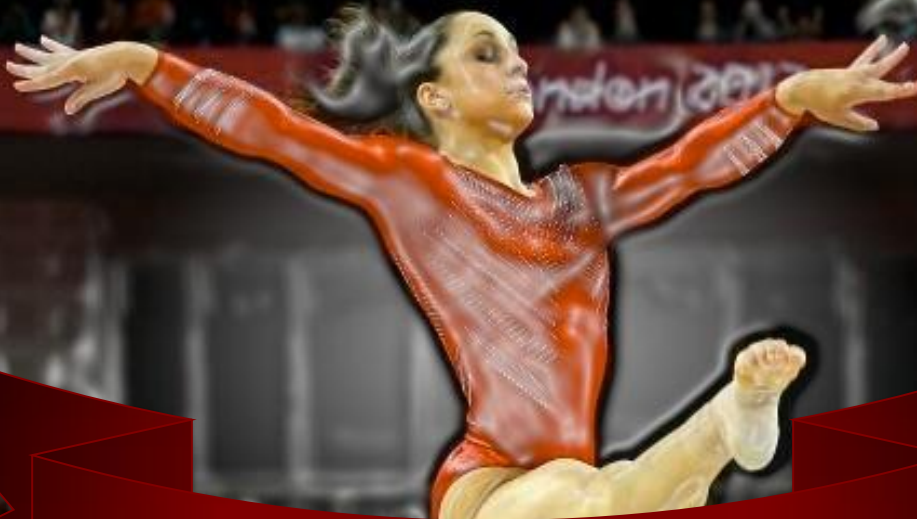
THIS EXERCISE WILL HELP YOU REFLECT ON POSITIVE FEELINGS AND ACTIONS WHEN YOU COMPETE AND RECALL THOSE FEELINGS TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO USE IMAGERY.

ONCE YOU CAN RECALL THESE FEELINGS YOU CAN REFOCUS THEM ONTO FUTURE MEETS.

THERE ARE SIX QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT TWO PAGES; FOCUS ON EACH ONE FOR 5 MINUTES. FOCUS YOUR ENERGY ON RECALLING SPECIFIC MOVEMENTS AND FEELINGS IN YOUR BODY.

WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS TO HELP YOU RECALL THESE EXPERIENCES IN THE FUTURE.

REFLECT ON THIS LIST ANY TIME YOU WANT TO CENTER YOUR ATTENTION ON POSITIVE FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES.



CHAMPIONS AREN'T MADE IN THE GYMS.
CHAMPIONS ARE MADE FROM SOMETHING THEY HAVE DEEP
INSIDE OF THEM- A DESIRE, A DREAM, A VISION."

~ MUHAMMAD ALI

14 DAYS OF FOCUS

1) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOU FELT YOUR TAKEOFF FOR A SKILL WAS ON.

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC MOVEMENTS IN THE SKILL WENT WELL?

2) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOU FELT YOUR ROUTINE WAS ON.

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS DO YOU REMEMBER WORKING FOR YOU?

3) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOU FELT STRONG.

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY REACT TO WARM-UPS?

4) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOUR LANDING WAS ON.

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY REACT TO YOUR ENTRY?

5) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOU FELT PREPARED.

✓ HOW DID YOU GENERALLY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS DO YOU REMEMBERING WORKING FOR YOU?

6) IMAGINE A TIME IN COMPETITION WHEN YOU FELT ALERT.

✓ HOW DID YOUR BODY FEEL?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC SENSATIONS CAN YOU REMEMBER?

✓ WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIONS DO YOU REMEMBER WORKING FOR YOU?

DAY 2

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES FOR WINNING

WITHOUT THINKING TOO MUCH ABOUT EACH WORD, WRITE AT LEAST SIX WORDS THAT COME TO YOUR MIND RELATED TO BEING SUCCESSFUL.

FINISH THE PHRASE: "A SUCCESSFUL PERSON IS _____."

WRITE AT LEAST SIX WORDS THAT REFLECT HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL AS YOU DO GYMNASTICS. FINISH THE PHRASE: "WHEN I AM IN CONTROL AND DOING MY BEST, I FEEL _____."

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| (1) | (4) |
| (2) | (5) |
| (3) | (6) |

WRITE AT LEAST SIX WORDS THAT REFLECT HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL AS YOU MASTER A SKILL. FINISH THE PHRASE: "WHEN I AM IN CONTROL AND DOING MY BEST, I FEEL _____."

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| (1) | (2) |
| (3) | (4) |
| (5) | (6) |

CIRCLE TWO OR THREE OF THE IN MOST POWERFUL WORDS IN EACH CATEGORY
WRITE UP TO SIX WORDS IN THE SPACES BELOW.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

Use these as your key power words. When you feel distracted, anxious, nervous, bored, tense, troubled, or down, you can use these words to set you back on track for success. When you feel thoughtful, content, relaxed, or happy, you can reflect on these words in order to feel even more positive about your upcoming meet.

DAY 3 POSITIVE SELF-TALK

THE POSITIVE THINGS YOU SAY TO YOURSELF DURING WORKOUTS, BEFORE A MEET, AND DURING A CONTEST, WILL AFFECT YOUR PERFORMANCE. YOU PROVIDE YOURSELF WITH SUPPORT AND CHART YOUR OWN DIRECTION TOWARD SUCCESS. TO HAVE EFFECTIVE SELF-TALK, YOU MUST PRACTICE IT CONSCIOUSLY AND REGULARLY.

SELF-TALK CAN BE WORDS OR SHORT PHRASES AND SHOULD ALWAYS BE POSITIVE. WHEN YOU SAY WORDS OR PHRASES TO YOURSELF, YOU SHOULD SAY THEM SINCERELY, NOT SARCASTICALLY. IF YOU REPEAT PHRASES AS IF YOU BELIEVE THEM, THEN OVER TIME YOU WILL COME TO BELIEVE THEM AND YOUR MIND AND BODY WILL RESPOND ACCORDINGLY. THIS PHENOMENON IS CALLED A "SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY."

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ I CAN SEE MY SKILLS CLEARLY | ✓ I STAY FOCUSED THE ENTIRE ROUTINE |
| ✓ I CONTROL MY GYMNASTICS | ✓ I AM POWERFUL |
| ✓ I AM CALM AND ALERT IN EACH EVENT | ✓ I LOVE A CHALLENGE |
| ✓ MY MOVEMENTS ARE EFFORTLESS | ✓ MY ROUTINES FLOW SEAMLESSLY |
| ✓ I PERFORM WITH PRECISION | ✓ I AM A GOOD GYMNAST |
| ✓ I HAVE ACCURATE LANDINGS | ✓ I RECOVER QUICKLY |
| ✓ I AM AGGRESSIVE | ✓ I SCORE WHAT I EXPECT |
| ✓ I AM SMART | ✓ I AM AT HOME ON THE EQUIPMENT AND IN THE AIR |
| ✓ I HAVE TRAINED FOR THIS MOMENT | |

LIST SOME SELF-TALK WORDS AND PHRASES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU:

YOU WILL COME TO BELIEVE THE THINGS THAT YOU TELL YOURSELF. BE SURE TO KEEP IT POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE IN ORDER TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE IN GYMNASTICS AND FRAME-OF-MIND. REPEAT SOME POSITIVE SELF-TALK PHRASES WHEN THINKING ABOUT GYMNASTICS, BEFORE PRACTICE, DURING PRACTICE, WHEN YOU WAKE EACH MORNING, WHILE WARMING UP FOR YOUR MEET, WHEN YOU STEP ONTO THE FLOOR, AND AS YOU EXECUTE EACH SKILL.

DAY 4

BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE BY FOCUSING ON YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU BEAT THE ODDS. IT COULD BE A SPORTING EVENT, SCHOOL-RELATED TASK, PERFORMANCE, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT COMES TO MIND. THIS IS A TIME WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU **COULD NOT** DO IT AND FELT THAT OTHER PEOPLE DOUBTED YOU, BUT YOU PERSISTED AND WERE SUCCESSFUL. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BASED ON THAT EVENT.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE EVENT.

--

LIST THREE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUCCESSFUL EVENT (E.G., THINGS THAT MADE THE EVENT CHALLENGING OR OUT OF THE ORDINARY).

1)

2)

3)

LIST THREE NEGATIVE THINGS YOU HEARD FROM OTHERS OR YOU SAID TO YOURSELF.

1)

2)

3)

LIST THREE POSITIVE THINGS YOU HEARD FROM OTHERS OR YOU SAID TO YOURSELF.

1)

2)

3)

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "WINNING" AND "LOSING"?

--

Confidence is based on observed reality. When you are starting to doubt your abilities, reflect on this time when you felt doubt, but you made the event successful.

DAY 5

GAINING CONTROL OF THE THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL (AND LETTING GO OF THE UNIMPORTANT STUFF)

STRESS OFTEN RESULTS FROM FEELING THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE OUT OF YOUR CONTROL. MANY TIMES THEY ARE. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU CANNOT CHOOSE WHO YOU COMPETE AFTER OR HOW NOISY THE CROWD IS.

BECAUSE GYMNASTICS MEETS ARE COMPRISED OF THINGS THAT YOU CAN CONTROL AND OTHER THINGS THAT YOU CANNOT, YOU MUST CHOOSE WHERE YOU PUT YOUR ENERGY, AND LET GO OF THE OTHERS. CONSIDER THAT OTHER STUFF UNIMPORTANT, AND STAY FOCUSED ON THE THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL.

1) WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU WAKE THE DAY OF A MEET?

2) WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO YOU LIKE TO DO THE DAY OF A MEET?

3) WHAT IS YOUR PRE-MEET ROUTINE THE DAY OF A COMPETITION?

4) WHAT KIND OF WARM-UP DO YOU LIKE TO DO THE DAY OF A MEET?

5) WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL FRAME OF MIND 45 MINUTES BEFORE YOU COMPETE?

6) HOW MUCH WATER/FLUID DO YOU INTAKE BEFORE YOU COMPETE?

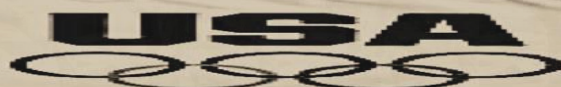
7) WHAT IS YOUR PRE-MEET ROUTINE WHEN YOU STEP UP TO EACH EVENT?

8) WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO YOU SAY TO YOURSELF WHEN YOU STEP UP TO EACH EVENT?

9) HOW DO YOU STEP UP TO EACH EVENT?

10) HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO PUSH YOURSELF DURING A MEET?

11) WHAT OVERALL STRATEGY WILL YOU IMPLEMENT?



DAY 6

WORKING THROUGH DISTRACTIONS

DISTRACTIONS PREVENT YOU FROM FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH YOUR PLAN OF ACTION. THAT ACTION MIGHT BE A WORKOUT, AN EXERCISE, A FRAME OF MIND, FOCUS OF YOUR MIND, OR ANY OTHER ACTIVITY OR MENTAL FRAME THAT CONTRIBUTES TO YOUR GYMNASTICS GOALS. DISTRACTIONS, HOWEVER, CAN BE MINIMIZED IF YOU (1) ARE AWARE THEY EXIST, AND (2) COMMIT TO HANDLING THEM IN A PRODUCTIVE MANNER.

BELOW IS A LIST OF CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS TO COPE WITH DISTRACTIONS. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, FILL IN AN APPROPRIATE COPING MECHANISM FOR SPECIFIC DISTRACTIONS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE. YOU

CONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

- ✓ REPEAT GYMNASTICS GOALS TO MYSELF.
- ✓ FOCUS ON POSITIVE SELF-TALK
- ✓ CONCENTRATE ON THE REASONS I WANT TO SUCCEED.
- ✓ TAKE A BREAK, AND THEN RETURN TO THE ACTION.
- ✓ COUNT TO 10, AND THEN ATTEMPT THE EXERCISE AGAIN.
- ✓ LEAVE THE SITUATION.
- ✓ REPLACE MY DISTRACTING THOUGHTS WITH SOMETHING ELSE MORE PRODUCTIVE.
- ✓ TUNE IT OUT, AND FOCUS ON MY BREATHING AND VISUALIZATION.
- ✓ REMIND PEOPLE I HAVE SPECIFIC GOALS I NEED TO MEET.
- ✓ TELL PEOPLE ABOUT MY GYMNASTICS GOALS; THEIR SUPPORT HELPS ME.
- ✓ ALLOW ANOTHER PERSON TO HANDLE THE DISTRACTION FOR ME.
- ✓ FOCUS MY MIND ON THE "BIG PICTURE" TO WORK THROUGH THE ISSUE.
- ✓ SEE THE SITUATION AS A TEMPORARY DISTRACTION THAT I CAN IGNORE.

Your opponent, in the end, is never really the player on the other side of the net, the swimmer in the next lane, or even the bar you must high-jump. Your opponent is yourself, your negative voices, your level of determination. ~ Grace Lichtenstein

WITH THESE STRATEGIES IN MIND, CONSIDER HOW YOU MIGHT BEST HANDLE THE DISTRACTIONS LISTED BELOW

- ✓ A loud noise in the gym _____
- ✓ People who want to chat during my workout _____
- ✓ A gymnastics teammate who isn't concentrating _____
- ✓ Phone calls during practice/conditioning time _____
- ✓ Coach yelling at me or a teammate _____
- ✓ People who I don't want watching me train _____
- ✓ Being in a bad mood _____
- ✓ Too hot or too cold in the gym _____
- ✓ Soreness or stiffness in my body _____
- ✓ People who want to hang out with me a lot _____
- ✓ Teammate who appears to be in a bad mood _____
- ✓ Equipment doesn't feel right _____
- ✓ I had a bad day and find myself thinking "life stuff" _____
- ✓ My biggest distraction is _____
- ✓ Another big distraction for me is _____
- ✓ Other ways I can cope are _____

You can prevent distractions from becoming obstacles to training and focus. Effective choices help you achieve your Gymnastics goals.

DAY 7

IMAGERY TECHNIQUE AND GENERAL STRATEGY

THE FOLLOWING TECHNIQUE AND GENERAL STRATEGY REMINDERS PROVIDE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS TO USE IMAGERY FOR YOUR GYMNASTICS SKILLS. FOR EACH OF THE REMINDERS, FOCUS ON HOW YOUR BODY FEELS,

Head: Position for skill

- Head is forward (or wherever it is supposed to be).
- Eyes are focused.
- Mind is clear.
- _____

Feet/legs: Movement in air during skill.

- Feet and legs are powerful on take off.
- Legs are straight and tight in the air (or bent as appropriate).
- Toes are pointed.
- _____

Trunk: Rotation and position.

- Trunk and hips are tight and positioned correctly.
- Hips are rotating or twisting quickly.
- _____

Arms/Hands: Position for flipping or twisting.

- Arms and hands are in correct position for each skill.
- Arms initiate take off and air positioning.
- _____

Strategy: Making every move count.

- Feel alert and relaxed.
- Be ready to perform each time.
- Feel the skill before you do it.
- Feel correct positioning in the air.
- Focus on technique not outcome.
- Control your energy level.
- _____
- _____

"There are only two options regarding commitment; you're either in or you're out. There's no such thing as life in-between."

~ Pat Riley

DAY 8

IMAGERY TO INCREASE GYMNASTICS SKILLS

IMAGERY CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR IMPROVING GYMNASTICS SKILLS, BECOMING MORE COMFORTABLE ON THE MAT AND WITH YOUR TEAM, AND BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE. FOR SUCCESSFUL RESULTS, IMAGERY SHOULD INCLUDE ALL YOUR SENSES. YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN

1) IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE IN THE PLACE IN WHICH YOU USUALLY PRACTICE. LOOK AROUND YOUR ENVIRONMENT. HOW DOES THE PLACE LOOK? WHAT COVERS THE WALLS? WHAT EQUIPMENT IS PRESENT? HOW DOES THE PLACE SMELL? FEEL YOURSELF IN YOUR WORKOUT CLOTHES. WHAT IS THE TEMPERATURE OF THE ROOM? HOW DOES THE FLOOR FEEL BENEATH YOUR FEET? FEEL YOUR BODY AS YOU GET READY TO PRACTICE.

WHAT OTHER THINGS CAN YOU IMAGINE ABOUT THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT?

2) INCORPORATE MOVEMENT. FEEL YOURSELF WALKING AROUND. FEEL YOURSELF WARMING UP. FEEL YOUR BODY AS YOU DO A FEW DRILLS TO GET WARMED UP. FEEL THE SWEAT ON YOUR FACE AND YOUR HANDS AS YOU ARE WARMING UP AND YOUR BODY TEMPERATURE INCREASES.

WHAT OTHER MOVEMENTS DO YOU FEEL?

3) IMAGINE YOURSELF PERFORMING SPECIFIC GYMNASTICS SKILLS. FEEL FREE TO ACTUALLY MOVE AROUND AS YOU IMAGINE THIS PART OF THE EXERCISE. FEEL YOURSELF PERFORMING THE FOLLOWING SKILLS COMFORTABLE, QUICKLY, WITH ENERGY, AND PERFECT FORM.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ JOG AROUND THE MAT AND JUMP | ✓ HURDLE |
| ✓ DO A BASIC TUMBLING WARM UP | ✓ DO A HANDSTAND |
| ✓ DO A WARM UP VAULT | ✓ DO GIANTS ON THE HIGH BAR/UNEVEN BARS |
| ✓ DO A BASIC BEAM/POMMEL HORSE WARM UP | ✓ DO A FRONT FLIP |
| ✓ DO A BACK FLIP | ✓ DO A TWISTING TUMBLING PASS |
| ✓ STICK THE LANDING | ✓ DISMOUNT FROM YOUR BEST EVENT |
| ✓ DISMOUNT FROM YOUR MOST CHALLENGING EVENT | |

Work through the progression at your own pace. Keep your imagery vivid. Use all your senses to make your imagery as realistic as possible.

DAY 9

IMAGERY FOR RELAXATION

READ THIS LIST OF FEELINGS AND ACTIONS TO YOURSELF AS YOU BREATHE DEEPLY, AND VISUALIZE YOURSELF AT THE GYM DURING A MEET. FOR DEEPER RELAXATION, HAVE SOMEONE ELSE READ THE LIST ALOUD TO YOU AS YOU LAY BACK WITH EVERY MUSCLE RELAXED AND EYES CLOSED, CONCENTRATING FULLY ON VISUALIZATION. YOU CAN ALSO MAKE A TAPE OF YOURSELF READING THROUGH THE PHRASES CONFIDENTLY AND SMOOTHLY, PROVIDING TIME BETWEEN EACH ITEM TO VISUALIZE COMPLETELY.

IMAGERY FOR RELAXATION STATEMENTS

- ✓ Begin by visualizing yourself at the gym preparing for a meet.
- ✓ You feel strong.
- ✓ You feel comfortable. You feel confident. You feel in control.
- ✓ As you wait for your turn, you feel your body is ready to perform.
- ✓ You stand at the corner of the floor mat, and feel tight yet fluid.
- ✓ Your feet are together and arms are in position.
- ✓ Your head is forward and you choose a focus point.
- ✓ You are alert and completely focused on this tumbling pass.
- ✓ You begin stepping into your hurdle and feel the rhythm of your movement on the floor as you perform your skill.
- ✓ You feel your take off for the skill, position is perfect.
- ✓ You are in the zone.
- ✓ You initiate the skill; feeling your actions as you gain height.
- ✓ Tumbling is fun because you can feel your body working perfectly.
- ✓ Now imagine your best tumbling.
- ✓ See yourself hit every position.
- ✓ Feel the landing.
- ✓ Now imagine your hardest tumbling pass.
- ✓ See yourself hit every position.
- ✓ Feel the landing. (Do this for skills on other events).
- ✓ You enjoy the challenge gymnastics.
- ✓ You perform with physical intensity and mental alertness. (Do this for skills on other events).
- ✓ You are always anticipating, your body is always ready to respond.
- ✓ You are in control of the meet, performing and dominating.
- ✓ You are quick, strong, smart, alert.
- ✓ You are a good gymnast.

TAKE THE TIME TO CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU CAN DO AND ON YOUR PARTICULAR TALENTS. RESIST THE URGE TO WORRY ABOUT THINGS YOU PERCEIVE AS WEAKNESSES OR FLAWS. YOUR STRENGTHS CAN OUTWEIGH SHORTCOMINGS IF YOU FOCUS ON WHAT MAKES YOU A SUCCESSFUL GYMNAST.

DAY 10 TAPPING YOUR STRENGTH RESERVOIR

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE IN GYMNASTICS IS YOUR INNER STRENGTH. LIKE PHYSICAL STRENGTH, YOUR INNER STRENGTH MUST BE DEVELOPED. DO THIS BY REFLECTING ON WHAT MAKES YOU ARE A STRONG GYMNAST. RAISE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS BY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS BELOW.

1) MY BEST TECHNIQUE IS...

2) MY BEST ROUTINE IS...

3) MY BEST SKILL IS...

4) MY BEST STRENGTH IS...

5) MY BEST OVERALL QUALITY AS A GYMNAST IS...

6) I AM PROUD THAT I...

7) I MADE A GOOD TRAINING DECISION WHEN I...

8) I AM IN CONTROL OF...

9) I AM NOT AFRAID TO...

10) I AM STRONG ENOUGH TO...

11) SOMETHING I CONSISTENTLY DO WELL IN MEETS IS...

12) MY COMPETITORS ARE PROBABLY MOST INTIMIDATED BY MY...

13) SOMETHING THAT I CAN DO NOW THAT I COULDN'T DO LAST YEAR IS...

14) SINCE I FIRST STARTED GYMNASTICS, I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED...

15) MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IN GYMNASTICS IS...

DAY 11

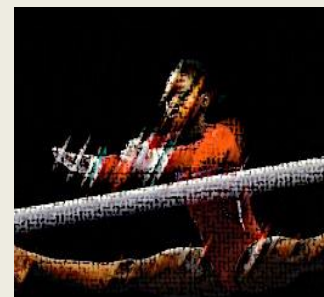
COPING WITH HIGH-STRESS SITUATIONS

DIFFERENT SITUATIONS CAN PRODUCE HIGH-STRESS FEELINGS. DURING THE TIME LEADING UP TO A MEET, YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF IN A NUMBER OF SITUATIONS AT HIGH RISK FOR PRODUCING STRESS. WHILE YOU CANNOT CONTROL THE SITUATIONS THEMSELVES, YOU CAN CONTROL THE WAY YOU COPE. LISTED BELOW ARE SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF COPING STRATEGIES THAT ARE POSITIVE WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS.

LISTED ON THIS PAGE ARE SOME SPECIFIC SITUATIONS THAT OFTEN PRODUCE STRESS FOR GYMNASTICS. ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT FEEL AFFECTED BY MANY OF THESE SITUATIONS, THERE MAY BE OTHERS THAT CAUSE YOU ANXIETY. YOU CAN ADD THOSE AT THE END. IN ORDER TO CONTROL YOUR REACTION TO THE SITUATION, CHOOSE A COPING RESPONSE THAT IS POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE. YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM SOME OF THE EXAMPLES LISTED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE OR LIST YOUR OWN RESPONSE FOR EACH OF THE ITEMS. YOU CONTROL YOUR REACTION, AND A POSITIVE REACTION WILL RESULT IN A POSITIVE OUTCOME.

COPING STRATEGIES

- 1) LEAVE THE SITUATION
- 2) TALK TO A TRUSTED CONFIDANTE (FRIEND, TEAMMATE, COACH) FACE-TO-FACE, ON THE PHONE, OR VIA EMAIL
- 3) THINK ABOUT THE REASONS YOU WANT TO SUCCEED AND THE BENEFITS THAT WILL RESULT FROM MAKING A CONSISTENT EFFORT
- 4) FOCUS ON REMEMBERING A PREVIOUS SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE
- 5) SWITCH TO A DIFFERENT EXERCISE OR DRILL
- 6) REMEMBER THREE COMPLIMENTS YOUR COACH HAS GIVEN YOU ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES
- 7) DRINK SOME WATER (OR OTHER SPORTS BEVERAGE)
- 8) MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR TRAINING LOG OR DIARY
- 9) AGREE TO "TRUST YOUR TRAINING"
- 10) FORGIVE YOURSELF, AND SEE THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY AS A CHANCE TO CHALLENGE YOURSELF
- 11) FOCUS ON RECOVERING FROM THE PROBLEMATIC THROW, STRIKE, OR DEFENSIVE MOVE
- 12) DEVELOP A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE ABOUT YOUR NEXT TECHNIQUE OR COMBINATION
- 13) USE POSITIVE IMAGERY
- 14) TELL YOURSELF "STOP!" BEFORE THE SITUATION FEELS OUT OF YOUR CONTROL, THEN REPLACE NEGATIVE THINKING WITH POSITIVE THINKING
- 15) REPLAY IN YOUR MIND A SIMILAR PERFORMANCE IN WHICH YOU EXECUTED YOUR PLAN EFFECTIVELY
- 16) PRACTICE YOUR TECHNIQUE IN WHICH YOU CORRECT THE PROBLEM
- 17) TAKE A 10-SECOND RELAXATION BREAK
- 18) BREATHE SOME "BLUE AIR" (SEE YOUR "MEET TOOLBOX" IN THIS MANUAL)
- 19) TAKE A SHORT JOG OR BRISK WALK
- 20) ADJUST YOUR UNIFORM AND STRETCH TO TAKE A BREAK AND REFOCUS
- 21) COUNT TO SEVEN WITH YOUR FOCUS WORDS
- 22) SMILE AND REPEAT YOUR #1 GOAL TO YOURSELF
- 23) USE SOME POSITIVE SELF-TALK PHRASES
- 24) TAKE A SLOW, DEEP BREATH



LISTED ON THIS PAGE ARE SOME SPECIFIC SITUATIONS THAT OFTEN PRODUCE STRESS FOR FENCERS. ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT FEEL AFFECTED BY MANY OF THESE SITUATIONS, THERE MAY BE OTHERS THAT CAUSE YOU ANXIETY. YOU CAN ADD THOSE AT THE END. IN ORDER TO CONTROL YOUR REACTION TO THE SITUATION, CHOOSE A COPING RESPONSE THAT IS POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE. YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM SOME OF THE EXAMPLES LISTED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE OR LIST YOUR OWN RESPONSE FOR EACH OF THE ITEMS. YOU CONTROL YOUR REACTION, AND A POSITIVE REACTION WILL RESULT IN A POSITIVE OUTCOME.

HIGH RISK SITUATIONS

COPING RESPONSES

- 1) AN IMPORTANT MEET _____
- 2) COMPETING AGAINST A WELL-KNOWN GYMNAST _____
- 3) NOT FEELING YOUR BEST PRIOR TO COMPETITION _____
- 4) FEELING INADEQUATELY PREPARED PRIOR TO COMPETITION _____
- 5) COMPETING IN FRONT OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY _____
- 6) COMPETING IN FRONT OF A LARGE (OR TELEVISED) AUDIENCE _____
- 7) ANOTHER GYMNAST OR COACH CRITICIZING YOUR ABILITY _____
- 8) YOU ARE PERFORMING NOTICEABLY BETTER THAN USUAL _____
- 9) YOU ARE PERFORMING NOTICEABLY WORSE THAN USUAL _____
- 10) YOU JUST MADE A SERIOUS ERROR OR MISTAKE _____
- 11) YOUR MEET IS LATER IN THE MEET AND MOST OF YOUR TEAMMATES...
 - ...HAVE LOST THEIR MEETS _____
 - ...HAVE WON THEIR MEETS _____
- 12) YOUR COACH HAS JUST CRITICIZED YOU _____
- 13) YOUR COMPETITOR SEEMS BIGGER, STRONGER, YOUNGER/OLDER THAN YOU _____
- 14) THE SET UP IS NOT TO YOUR LIKING _____
- 15) YOU CANNOT LOCATE YOUR UNIFORM _____
- 16) YOUR COMPETITOR TRIES TO INTIMIDATE YOU WITH CHATTER, FANCY MOVES, OR LOOKS _____
- 17) YOU HAVE AN "OFF" PRACTICE BEFORE THE MEET _____
- 18) YOU HAVE TO WAIT AROUND FOR YOUR MEET BEGINS _____
- 19) SOMEONE TELLS YOU SOMETHING IMPRESSIVE ABOUT YOUR COMPETITORS _____
- 20) YOU'RE ONE OF THE FIRST EVENTS _____
- 21) YOU FEEL YOU GOT A BAD DRAW _____
- 22) YOU GET CAUTIONED OR WARNED FOR SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T DO _____
- 23) YOUR COMPETITORS LOOK ESPECIALLY MEAN OR TOUGH _____

DAY 12

TRUST YOUR TRAINING

CONSIDER WHAT GOT YOU HERE AND THE COMMITMENTS YOU HAVE MADE TO GET READY FOR THIS EVENT. READ EACH QUESTION BELOW AND RATE ON A 5 POINT SCALE WITH 1 BEING "DOES NOT APPLY AT ALL TO ME" AND 5 BEING "VERY MUCH APPLIES TO ME." THERE ARE NO TRICK QUESTIONS AND THE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
DOES NOT APPLY AT ALL MODERATELY APPLIES VERY MUCH APPLIES

- 1) I HAVE INTENTIONALLY PREPARED FOR THIS EVENT. _____
- 2) I HAVE WORKED HARD IN PRACTICE AND PUSHED MYSELF PHYSICALLY. _____
- 3) I HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO PREPARE MYSELF MENTALLY. _____
- 4) I HAVE MADE TRAINING A PRIORITY IN MY LIFE. _____
- 5) I HAVE PRACTICED COMMON MEET SITUATIONS AND SCENARIOS. _____
- 6) I HAVE SURROUNDED MYSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO LOOK OUT FOR ME. _____
- 7) I HAVE KEPT MY COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING MY SKILLS AND FITNESS. _____
- 8) MY COACH KNOWS THE SPORT AND HAS MY BEST INTERESTS IN MIND. _____
- 9) MY COACH LISTENS TO ME AND WE COLLABORATE ABOUT MY TRAINING. _____
- 10) I HAVE BECOME A BETTER GYMNAST OVER THE PAST YEAR. _____
- 11) I KNOW THE RULES AND REGULATIONS AND HOW TO USE THEM TO MY ADVANTAGE. _____
- 12) I HAVE PUSHED MYSELF BEYOND WHAT I THOUGHT MY LIMITS ONCE WERE. _____

LIST SOME NEW THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNED THIS YEAR

LIST SOME SPECIFIC THINGS YOU HAVE IMPROVED ON THIS YEAR

Your heart is leading a journey with your mind and body. Your commitment to preparing mentally and physically for this event has meant a journey of sacrifice.

Champions are not born, they are made.

You have taken necessary steps to making yourself successful.

Trust your training and enjoy the benefits of hard work.

DAY 13

BEFORE THE MEET. A NOTE TO SELF

FIND A STILL, QUIET PLACE. IN THIS EXERCISE YOU WILL IMAGINE THE TIME LEADING UP TO YOUR MEET. USE THE WORDS ON THIS PAGE AS A GUIDE AND FEEL FREE TO DRIFT INTO OUR OWN FOCUSED IMAGERY.

DAY 14 SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

WRITE DOWN SOME OF THE SPECIFICS FOR THE MEET.

- ✓ HOW MANY DAYS OF COMPETITION ARE SCHEDULED? _____
- ✓ HOW MANY MEETS ARE SCHEDULED? _____
- ✓ WHAT TIMES ARE YOUR EVENTS SCHEDULED? _____
- ✓ WILL YOU COMPETE STRAIGHT THROUGH? _____
- ✓ HOW MANY EVENTS WILL YOU COMPETE IN? _____
- ✓ HOW MANY JUDGES WILL BE THERE? _____
- ✓ WHAT WILL THE JUDGES WEAR? _____
- ✓ HOW BIG IS THE VENUE? _____
- ✓ WHO WILL BE COACHING YOU? _____
- ✓ WHO WILL BE IN THE STANDS CHEERING FOR YOU? _____

NOW THINK ABOUT THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE DONE TO SET THE STAGE FOR YOUR SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION AT THIS EVENT. LIST FOUR SPECIFIC THINGS YOU HAVE PRACTICED WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND/OR COACH THAT YOU EXPECT YOU WILL ENCOUNTER.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

NOW CONSIDER THE PERSONAL COMMITMENTS YOU HAVE MADE TO GET READY FOR THIS EVENT. LIST SPECIFIC THINGS YOU HAVE DONE THAT SET THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS.

OTHER PEOPLE HAVE HELPED YOU SET A SUCCESSFUL STAGE. LIST THE NAMES OF COACHES, TEAMMATES, SUPPORTERS, SPONSORS, FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR ANYONE ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF. THESE PEOPLE ARE "IN YOUR CORNER" AND ARE PROUD OF THE COMMITMENTS YOU HAVE MADE IN PREPARING FOR THIS EVENT.

Now the stage is set for the actual event. When you visualize your successful performance, you can imagine some of the details outlined on this page.

MEET TOOLBOX

STRATEGY 1: TEN SECOND RELAXATION BREAK

STEP 1: SMILE AS YOU SAY TO YOURSELF...

"MY BODY DOESN'T NEED THIS _____."
(IRRITATION/STRESS/DISTRACTION)

STEP 2: TAKE A SLOW, DEEP BELLY BREATH...

... COUNT TO FOUR SLOWLY ON THE INHALE AND ON THE EXHALE.

STEP 3: TAKE A SECOND BELLY BREATH...

... CLOSE YOUR EYES AT THE TOP OF THE INHALATION.

... AS YOU EXHALE...IMAGINE (VISUALIZE AND FEEL) SOMETHING WARM

... ENTERING YOUR BODY AT YOUR HEAD

... AND FLOWING DOWN INTO YOUR HANDS AND FEET.

... HEAVINESS AND WARMTH ARE FLOWING IN.

... THINK TO YOURSELF "I AM CALM."

STEP 4: OPEN YOUR EYES.

Winning isn't something that happens suddenly on the field when the whistle blows and the crowds roar.

Winning is something that builds physically and mentally every day that you train and every night that you dream. ~ Emmitt Smith



MEET TOOLBOX

STRATEGY 2: 20 MINUTES BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE VENUE

ABOUT 20 MINUTES BEFORE YOU DEPART FOR THE VENUE GO OVER THIS WORKSHEET AND REMINDER LIST TO CENTER YOUR MIND AND PREPARE FOR COMPETITION.

REDUCE ANXIETY BY BEING PREPARED. USE THIS LIST TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PACKED EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED FOR THE EVENT. SKIP OVER ITEMS THAT DO NOT APPLY TO YOU AND HAD OTHER ITEMS AS NEEDED.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ✓ LEOTARD/PANTS/SHIRTS | ✓ SOCKS | ✓ SNACKS/MONEY |
| ✓ KEYS | ✓ CONTACTLENSES & SOLUTION | ✓ CREDENTIALS/IDENTIFICATION |
| ✓ TOWEL | ✓ WATER | ✓ MEDICATIONS |
| ✓ GUM | ✓ SHOES/FLIPFLOPS | ✓ MP3 PLAYER AND HEADPHONES |
| ✓ COMPETITION BRA | ✓ WARM-UP SUIT | ✓ CLEAN CLOTHES FOR AFTERWARDS |
| ✓ RUBBER BANDS FOR HAIR | ✓ SPRAY BOTTLES | ✓ HANDGRIPS |
| ✓ TAPE | ✓ _____ | ✓ _____ |

VISUALIZE SUCCESS. IMAGINE A SUCCESSFUL ROUTINE. WHAT DO YOU SEE? HOW DOES YOUR BODY FEEL WHEN YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL? NOW IMAGINE HAVING THOSE SAME FEELINGS IN YOUR ROUTINE TODAY. IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL. IMAGINE PERFORMING YOUR BEST EVER.

SET IT IN. REPEAT THE FOLLOWING PHRASES OUT LOUD - AS QUIETLY OR AS LOUDLY AS YOU LIKE. I AM STRONG. I AM PRECISE. I AM SMART. I DOMINATE. I AM COURAGEOUS. I HAVE QUICK ACTIONS. I HAVE GOOD AIR SENSE. I AM RELAXED. I AM ALERT. I AM PREPARED.

REFOCUS. NOW TAKE 7 SLOW, DEEP BREATHERS AS YOU FOCUS ON 7 POWER WORDS. IF POSSIBLE, CLOSE YOUR EYES AS YOU DO THIS EXERCISE. AS YOU EXHALE EACH BREATH, THINK ABOUT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SEVEN WORDS IN THE ORDER SPECIFIED BELOW.

- (1) **STRONG** (2) **PRECISE** (3) **RELAXED** (4) **IN CONTROL**
 (5) **ALERT** (6) **ENERGY** (7) **SUCCESS**

CONTROL THE SITUATION. WITH YOUR BAG PACKED AND YOUR MIND FOCUSED DO SOME LIGHT MOVEMENTS. GO OVER FULL ROTATION OF JOINTS (NECK, FINGERS, WRISTS, ELBOWS, SHOULDERS, HIPS, KNEES, AND ANKLES). YOU ARE NOW MENTALLY PREPARED FOR YOUR COMPETITION. TOURNAMENT YOUR GROUP OR YOUR RIDE FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED DEPARTURE TIME SO THAT YOU ARE NOT RUSHED IN CASE THE PLAN CHANGES. WHEN YOU SEE YOUR COACH, TEAMMATES, HOTEL STAFF, OR PEOPLE FROM OTHER TEAMS, SAY HELLO. THE ACTION OF SPEAKING TO OTHERS WILL RELAX YOU AND PUT YOU IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.

MEET TOOLBOX

STRATEGY 4: STAYING FOCUSED ON REST DAYS

NOTE: USE THIS EXERCISE IF YOU HAVE ALREADY COMPETED BUT HAVE A REST DAY IN THE MIDDLE OF COMPETITION.

WITH A DAY OF REST IN THE MIDDLE OF COMPETITION, YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAL YOUR BODY AND MIND AND REFOCUS MENTALLY ON THE TASK AHEAD. VIEW THIS SITUATION AS A POSITIVE OPPORTUNITY. USED CORRECTLY, A REST DAY CAN GIVE YOU AN EDGE AGAINST YOUR COMPETITION.

REST DAY IS FINE, AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT PRODUCE ANXIETY FOR YOU. LIST SOME THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU RELAX MENTALLY AND/OR PHYSICALLY, THAT YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU HAVE FREE TIME TODAY.

RELAXING THINGS TO DO TODAY:

STEP 4: REFOCUS

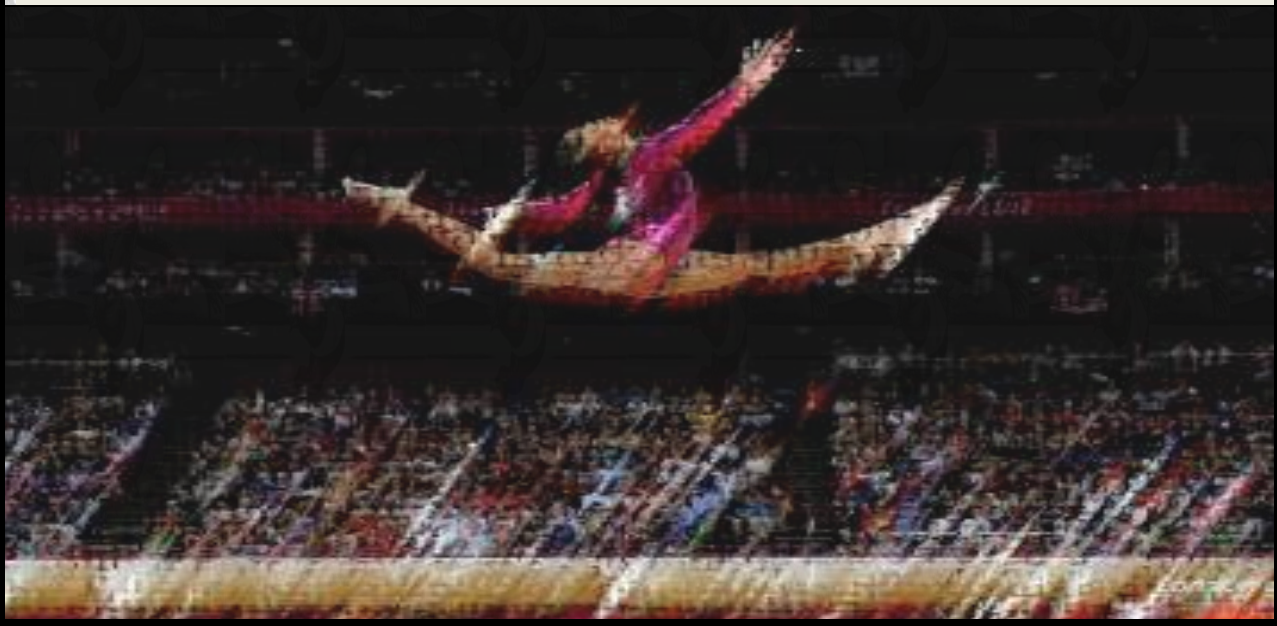
TOWARD LATE AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING, PRACTICE IMAGERY. GO OVER YOUR PERSONAL STRATEGIES AND STRATEGIES FOR TOMORROW'S MEET. TECHNIQUES AS WELL AS WHAT YOU EXPECT DURING THE MEET. USING THE BLANKS BELOW, CREATE A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES ON WHICH TO REFOCUS YOUR MENTAL IMAGERY.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR TOMORROW'S MEET:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

PERSONAL (GENERAL) STRATEGIES:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)



MEET TOOLBOX

STRATEGY 5: BREATHE BLUE AIR TO FACILITATE RELAXATION WHEN STRESSED

VISUALIZE THAT THE AIR YOU ARE BREATHING IN AND OUT HAS A COLOR. IF YOU ARE HIGHLY STRESSED, UPTIGHT, OR NOT FEELING WELL, THE AIR YOU EXHALE WILL BE RED. BREATHE DEEPLY. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE THAT THE AIR YOU EXHALE IS A DEEP RED. IT IS RICH IN COLOR.

... **NOW FEEL** THE MUSCLES IN YOUR BODY BEGIN TO RELAX. AND CONTINUE TO BREATHE DEEPLY. ALLOW YOURSELF TO LET GO OF STRESSFUL FEELINGS. AS YOU BREATHE DEEPLY, IMAGINE THAT THE AIR YOU TAKE IN IS A DARK RICH BLUE COLOR. THE AIR YOU BREATHE IN IS BLUE, AND THE AIR YOU EXHALE IS RED.

... **THE RED COLOR** IS SUCH BECAUSE YOU ARE RIDDING YOUR BODY OF THE STRESS WITH EACH BREATH. SEE THE BLUE AIR IN FRONT OF YOUR MOUTH, READY TO BE TAKEN INTO YOUR LUNGS. ONCE INSIDE, THE BLUE AIR TURNS RED AS THE AIR MOVES THE STRESS OUT OF YOUR BODY.

... **WITH EACH SLOW, DEEP BREATH,** THE AIR YOU EXHALE BEGINS TO LIGHTEN IN COLOR. NOW IT IS A LIGHT RED. AS MORE AND MORE STRESSORS LEAVE YOUR BODY, THE AIR BECOMES LIGHTER STILL...NOW IT IS PINK. THE DARK BLUE AIR YOU BREATHE IN NOW BARELY HAS A COLOR AT ALL. CONTINUE TO BREATHE DEEPLY, LETTING GO OF TENSION AND STRESS. LET EACH BREATH CARRY AWAY THE NEGATIVE. BREATHE IN THE POSITIVE, BLUE AIR. YOU ARE RELAXING NOW. THE TENSION IS ALMOST GONE, AND YOU ARE FEELING MORE AND MORE RELAXED.

... **BREATHE THE BLUE AIR IN,** AND CONTINUE TO IMAGINE THE AIR YOU EXHALE AS ALMOST COLORLESS. AS YOU CONTINUE TO RELAX, IMAGINE THAT THE AIR YOU EXHALE BEGINS TO TURN LIGHT BLUE.

... **YOU ARE MORE** AND MORE RELAXED NOW. BREATHE BLUE AIR, AND FEEL THE COOL BLUE AIR CIRCULATING THROUGH YOUR LUNGS. WITH NO MORE STRESS AND TENSION TO PICK UP, IT STAYS BLUE. SLOW, DEEP BREATHS CONTINUE TO RELAX YOUR BODY.

... **INHALE BLUE AIR,** AND EXHALE BLUE AIR. BREATHE BLUE AIR. TAKE IT IN, HOLD IT, AND EXHALE SLOWLY. THE AIR IS BLUE AND COOL. IT RELAXES YOU, COMFORTS YOU, AND MAKES YOU FEEL CONFIDENT

... **BREATHE BLUE AIR ...**