

## Importances of visualization techniques in sports

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### ABSTRACT

In psychological disorders, emotional mental images can flash to mind and be highly distressing, including traumatic memories or simulations of feared future events. Mental imagery is typically measured with self-reports, but these can be sensitive to spurious factors, such as demand characteristics and socially desirable responding. Other ways to measure mental imagery have been used, such as behavioral tasks, psychophysiological measures, and functional neuroimaging. Mental imagery is a promising tool and mechanism of psychological interventions, particularly for mood and anxiety disorders. In parallel developments, neuromodulation techniques have shown promise as add-on therapies in psychiatry, particularly non-invasive brain stimulation for depression. The imagery rehearsal training consisted of relaxation using guided imagery conducted by an experienced clinical psychologist. The procedure aimed to elicit a calm and relaxed state by asking the students to assume a relaxed position, breathe deeply and regularly, and feel waves of relaxation flow through their bodies. Mental images can also take the place of perceptual stimuli during various types of learning. Perceptual learning typically involves repeated performance of a perceptual detection or discrimination task that leads to increases in performance. However, imagining the crucial components of such a task, instead of actually performing them on a perceptual stimulus, can also enhance performance on the perceptual task. In conclusion, mental imagery is a core process of many psychological interventions, particularly in affective and anxiety disorders. It has also been a core topic of investigation of cognitive neuroscience, and the neural and psychological mechanisms of mental imagery and its impact on emotional experience have been extensively studied. Mental images can also take the place of perceptual stimuli during various types of learning. Perceptual learning typically involves repeated performance of a perceptual detection or discrimination task that leads to increases in performance. Based on this knowledge of processes, enhance sports performance and athletes performance. Sport psychology is defined as the enhancement of sports performance through psychological skills training.

**KEYWORDS:** visualization, practices, motivation.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Sports psychology is essentially the study of how the mind affects physical activity and athletic performance. According to the American Psychological Association, "sports psychology addresses the interactions between psychology and sport performance, including the psychological aspects of optimal athletic performance, psychological care and well-being of athletes, coaches, and sport organizations, and the connection between physical and psychological functioning. Sports psychology is the sport science that seeks to understand psychological and mental factors that affect performance in sports, physical activity and exercise, and apply these to enhance individual and team performance. Sports psychology is now so important to performance at the top level of sport that most elite sporting clubs and individuals employ sports Psychologists to work with them. There are four major performance skills for all elite sportsmen and women, these being technical, physical, tactical and mental. The latter skill is one that can make the crucial difference for athletes performing consistently to their abilities. Sport psychology has played a significant role in the understanding, training and ultimately the use of mental skills for peak performance.

### **Imagery in rehabilitation:**

Cognitive general strategy  
Cognitive Specific skill  
Motivational specific goal  
Motivational general arousal  
Motivational general mastery.

Sports visualization is an experience... a training experience, a preparation experience and a warm-up experience. Visualization for athletes is a skill that you can improve and benefit from. There is one thing that separates elite athletes from average athletes... Elite athletes utilize the power of guided imagery or visualization. Imagery has long been a part of elite sports and many Olympic athletes have mastered the skill with the help of Sport Psychologists and Mental Game Coaches. Guided visualization or imagery for athletes is consciously controlling the images or directing an athletic script in your head. One example of guided imagery that you have unknowingly used is when your coach was teaching you a new skill. You created an image in your mind of how the skill should look or the successful execution of the skill.

**PROCEDURE OF THE TRAINING:**

Guided visualization or imagery is purposely rehearsing a skill, routine or performance in your mind's eye to program your body for success. However, sports visualization or mental imagery is more than just a visual experience. Many athletes prefer to feel movements and engage in the kinesthetic past of imagery.

Concentration, confidence, control and commitment (the 4C's) are generally considered the main mental qualities.

that are important for successful performance in most sports.

1. Concentration - ability to maintain focus
2. Confidence - believe in one's abilities
3. Control - ability to maintain emotional control regardless of distraction
4. Commitment - ability to continue working to agreed goals

The techniques of relaxation, centering and mental imagery can assist an athlete to achieve the 4C's.

**Use Sports Visualization For successful Performance:**

Visualize the outcome you want – When you mentally rehearse your performance in your head, make sure you see the event as how you want it to unfold. If your mental images turn negative, stop the mental tape, rewind and restart then visualize again to see the performance you want to see.

Use all your senses from a first-person perspective – Visualize your sports performance in detail. What would you see, hear, feel, smell and taste? Feel how your body would feel as you go through the motions of your performance. Try adding in some physical movements that coincide with the visualized images. Feel the excitement of successfully fulfilling your performance goal.

Practice frequently – Mental rehearsal for athletes is a skill that becomes better with repetition. Practice your visualization or imagery daily.

If you want to take advantage of the power of visualization, consult with a Mental Game Coach about incorporating this essential skill into your training.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

As Olympic athletes gear up for 2016 Rio Olympic Games, many athletes are following the successful blueprints laid out by their 2014 winter Olympic counterparts who competed successfully in Sochi. Canadian bobsledder Lyndon Rush credited imagery with helping him keep his head in the game throughout the long, arduous four years of training between the 2010 and 2014 Olympic Games. Athletes who use visualization can eliminate some of the unknowns that create competitive anxiety. When athletes use visualization, they not only see the action unfold but truly feel the event take place in their mind's eye. Visualization in sporting events can be significantly improved by providing accurate tracking information of the players and objects in the event. Sporting events such as American football or rugby have proved difficult for camera- and radio-based tracking due to blockage of the line-of-sight, or proximity of the ball to groups of players. Mental skills coaching in goal setting, imagery, positive self-talk, and heart rate control is integrated into routine physical fitness training. Through imagery, the brain uses all senses, sight, smell, sound, proprioception, and touch, to mentally replicate motor function. This activity promotes neural impulses to muscles involved, providing muscle memory when executing the event. Neurophysiologic studies show that motor performed and imagined tasks trigger overlapping neural centers improving performance and form including muscular force, movement variability, and precision. An added benefit to visualizing perfect form is injury prevention. Positive thinking or positive self-talk improves competence by affirming ability as well as perceived level of individual control. Positive self-talk is used as a motivation strategy by elite athletes for improved attention, confidence, and performance.

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