

Mental Imagery Worksheet 1 – Team Activity

Coaches: Lead your athletes through these activities. Keep one eye on the clock. Plan for approximately 30 minutes to complete all steps. Give the second and third page to the athletes.

1. **2-3 min: Discuss the concept of imagery with the athletes.** Ensure that they understand that imagery can incorporate all 5 senses, and the more detailed they can make the image the better. Discuss the 5 functions of imagery. Ensure they understand that the benefits derived from imagery increase with more deliberate practice.
2. **5 min: Discuss whether or not athletes currently use imagery.** If so, how do they use it? What sorts of things do they imagine? Do they find it easy to see/feel movements? The best imagery involves all of the senses. Discuss which ones are hardest for them to incorporate.
3. **2-3 min: Identify a situation when athletes would like to use imagery to help them perform.** Identify what the focus of the imagery will be, which of the 5 functions of imagery is it (i.e., how it will be used to help athletes – execute a skill or strategy, feel confident, relax, etc.).
4. **10 min: Using the Imagery Script template in the handouts, begin to construct an imagery script.** Complete this as a group – perhaps have a designated writer to capture the details. Have them fill in the outline (key events), and then discuss to ensure they have a complete list. Next, add details, encouraging them to include information for all the senses. The best imagery involves not just sights (e.g., colours, locations, sizes, shapes) but sounds (e.g., balls bouncing, crowd cheering), smells (e.g., locker room, popcorn at the concession stand), tastes (e.g., salty sweat, cool water), emotions (e.g., excitement, pride, nerves), and feelings (e.g., hand making contact with the ball, arm moving through the air, feet pushing off the ground). Finally, encourage them to add in cues for personal details (e.g., team colours, home gym features).
5. **5-7 min: Coaches – lead your athletes through the imagery script.** Highlight the story point, add in the details, and then encourage them to personalize the image before moving on to the next story point. Pause after giving details to allow athletes time to imagine. **Afterwards, discuss whether there are ways the script can be improved. What elements were easy/hard to imagine?**

Reminders:

- Athletes can use whichever imagery perspective they wish (internal or external) and incorporate as many senses as possible. There is no right or wrong. Some perspectives may be easier to use when imagining specific situations (e.g., visual perspective for layout of the court vs. kinesthetic perspective for movements).
- If athletes have trouble forming an image, encourage them to take a breath, rewind the scenario, and try again. This is a skill that takes time and practice to master.
- If athletes have trouble imagining a movement, encourage them to get up and mimic the movement. They can move while imagining or stay still.
- Athletes can image with their eyes open or closed – it's a personal preference.

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Imagery can help you to...

- ✓ Learn and execute skills and strategies.
- ✓ Be more confident!
- ✓ Psych yourself up!
- ✓ Relax!
- ✓ Focus.
- ✓ Deal with distractions.
- ✓ Be more consistent.
- ✓ Stay motivated.
- ✓ Be mentally tough.
- ✓ Stay positive!
- ✓ Reach your goals.
- ✓ Recover from injury.

To maximize its effectiveness, use imagery...

- ✓ **In training:** imagine skills & strategies before you execute them.
- ✓ **At home:** use imagery to simulate training and game conditions. Use it as extra practice time to perfect skills, build confidence, etc.
- ✓ **In games:** Before, during, after a game, imagine the event, critical situations and how you will handle them.
- ✓ **In recovery:** use imagery to imagine your body recovering/healing, feeling rested and energized. Use it as a strategy to help you relax and sleep the day before a big game or as a way to help you heal from injury.

Write your own Imagery Script!

1. Tell the story (Key points/events in game situation)	2. Add details (Info from your senses)	3. Refine/Personalize