



WARRIOR MIND TRAINING

A PERSON CANNOT BE CONQUERED FROM THE OUTSIDE
UNLESS THEY ARE DEFEATED FROM THE INSIDE

10 Mental Strength Secrets for Physique Athletes *(Key Tips for Winning at Figure, Fitness and Bodybuilding Competitions)*

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Introduction

Fitness, figure and bodybuilding competitors are some of the most dedicated and disciplined athletes you are likely to find. And, considering just how competitive and demanding their sports are, they have to be.

First, there's the training and conditioning that goes into perfecting their bodies. This means working out for several hours every day, sticking to strict diets that most people couldn't even begin to imagine, and learning everything they can about health, fitness and nutrition.

But being a fitness or figure competitor goes beyond working out in the gym on a daily basis, and rigorously watching everything you eat. A competitor has to invest a great deal of time, money and energy into their sport. They might have to miss a friend's party to learn a new routine. They spend their free time—time most people spend resting, relaxing and having fun—prepping for competitions, then traveling to and from those competitions. And instead of buying a new laptop, or going to a concert featuring their favorite band, they spend much of their money on things that will help them put their best foot forward while competing. (From the outfits they will wear, to the tan they need to best show off their physique.)

And let's not forget coaches. Many competitors hire coaches and trainers to help improve their chances of winning. A single competitor might have one coach to help them train, another coach to help them develop their routine, and yet another coach to help them with diet and nutrition.

Many think being a fitness or figure competitor is all about the glamour and excitement. And those are definitely a part of it. But it is also hard work. Considering all that goes into it, all the time and sacrifice required to succeed, some might wonder why someone would devote themselves to a sport that demands so much dedication and drive. But successful fitness and figure competitors will tell you that all the hard work makes winning that much more satisfying.

When you think of how hard fitness and figure competitors work to succeed, how much time and money they spend on being the best they can be, it's shocking to realize how many of them miss the one thing that could make the difference between standing on the winner's podium, and standing on the sidelines and watching while someone else is handed the trophy. The one thing every champion in every sport you can name credits with their success.

Mental strength.

What Is Mental Strength?

So what is mental strength? Well, some call it confidence. Others call it fortitude. Still others call it mental toughness. Whatever you call it, mental strength is what helps you to keep playing and training through injuries and injury scares. To thrive under pressure while your competitors are falling apart. To never give up, no matter how many setbacks or disappointments you might endure, or how hard things might get. To triumph against opponents who, on paper at least, might be favored to win.

Many renowned experts have come to realize that, for any athlete, mental conditioning is as important as physical conditioning. In fact, the more competitive the sport, the more important developing mental strength is. And in the competitive world of fitness and figure competitions, mental strength is key.

Developing Mental Strength

Developing mental strength isn't as difficult or mysterious as it might sound. In fact, there are 10 techniques you can use to start making yourself more mentally tough, many of which you can start putting into action right now.

Do you want to drastically increase your chances of success? Do you want to be a champion? Then it's time to start putting these mental strength secrets to work for you.

1 - Motivation

Motivation is your reason. It's the incentive you have for engaging in any activity or behavior. And, the stronger your motivation is, the more likely you are to do that thing.

For example, say someone challenged you to run 10 miles just because. If you don't like running all that much, chances are you won't feel very motivated to accept the challenge.

But what if that person promised to give you \$100 once you'd completed that 10 mile run? Well, then you'd have a pretty big motivation to put on your running shoes.

The more challenging and difficult an activity is, the bigger our motivation to do it needs to be. And, considering how challenging being a figure or fitness competitor can be, it helps if you have a powerful motivation to keep you going through the hours, weeks and months of intense, ongoing training.

There are actually two kinds of motivation. And one is better than the other.

Extrinsic Motivation

With extrinsic motivation, the reasons you have for training and competing come from outside of yourself.

When you get up in the morning and feel like the last thing you want to do is workout, you remind yourself of all of the things you will get if you win the next competition. The trophy. The prizes. Attention and praise for being a champion. The look on your biggest rivals face when you beat them.

Reminding yourself of these rewards might be all it takes to get you out of bed and headed to the gym.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivations are internal, and come from inside yourself.

You wake up one morning dreading the hours of working out ahead. But you remind yourself how good you feel after a workout. How proud of yourself you during a competition you've done everything you could to get into the best shape possible. And how much you actually like working out once you get into it.

These rewards might be intangible, but they can also be powerful enough to get you into the workout room.

Intrinsic Vs. Extrinsic Motivation

There's nothing wrong with a little extrinsic motivation. Who doesn't want to win the competition they've been training so hard for?

But if your only motivations are extrinsic, you can run into some trouble down the road.

For example, say winning *is* your biggest motivation for being a fitness or figure competitor. Up until the competition, this motivation might be enough to keep you sticking to your workout schedule, faithfully following your diet, and practicing your routine to perfection.

But what if you don't win?

You didn't get the reward you thought you'd get for all of that hard work, so the hard work can suddenly feel like a waste. You might enter another competition. But because you didn't get the rewards you promised yourself for all of your hard work last time, your

subconscious is whispering, "Well, you're not going to get it this time either. So what are you doing all of this for? Nothing, that's what."

You're motivation for working so hard, and being so dedicated, just won't have the same power it did before. And, suddenly, you'll find yourself not working out the way you are supposed to, giving in to your temptation to eat the wrong foods, and not practicing your routine as often as you should.

If your biggest motivations are intrinsic, you won't have the same kinds of problems. Yes, you might be disappointed if you don't win the competition. But the biggest reasons you have for training, and the rewards you get out of the training process, won't change. And neither will the amount of dedication and discipline you devote to your training.

Developing Intrinsic Motivations

The best way to develop intrinsic motivations is to focus on the things you have control over. You can't really control whether you win or lose a competition. But you can control the kind of shape you'll be in when you compete. You can't control how many people will compliment you for having a great body. But you can control how good you feel about being in great shape.

Do you want to succeed as a fitness or figure competitor? Then you must find things to love and enjoy about your sport beyond winning.

2 - Mental Rehearsal

Do you find yourself feeling nervous or jittery just before you step out on stage? Does this negatively affect your performance?

Do you lay awake for hours at night worrying that you will forget your routine? Does this make you feel even more nervous and anxious?

If either of the above applies to you, then mental rehearsal might be the answer.

What Is Mental Rehearsal?

Mental rehearsal is exactly what it sounds like. You imagine yourself competing,

mentally going over your routines, step-by-step, exactly as you intend to do them when up on that stage.

Mental rehearsal is one of the most proven mental strengthening techniques out there. Countless studies have shown that athletes who use the mental rehearsal techniques are more likely to be successful than those who don't.

How Does It Work?

Athletes know that, the more they practice, the more conditioned their body will be to instinctively perform the movements required by their sport. A professional tennis player doesn't have to think about chasing down a ball. They don't have to think about all the movements that go into returning a perfect shot. They've repeated these movements so often that they are instinctive. Their brains automatically sends out the signals necessary to make their bodies perform as needed.

Mental rehearsal adds another layer to this mental programming. Due to the demands of your life (work, family, etc.) there is only so much physical practicing even the most dedicated fitness or figure competitor can do. Fortunately, you can practice mentally almost any time and almost anywhere. And while it might not seem like just thinking about doing something would really be all that helpful, studies have shown that it can drastically increase an athlete's chances of success on the field, on the court, or on the stage.

How to Mentally Rehearse

One of the keys of mental rehearsal is to be as specific as possible about the movements your body will make during competition. It's not time to fantasize about throwing kisses to a cheering crowd. Instead, you want to imagine yourself going through your routine, step-by-step.

So, do just that. Sit in a chair, close your eyes and imagine yourself stepping onto the stage. Imagine yourself doing your poses or performing your routine. Imagine how your body will feel. And imagine everything going perfectly.

After you've mentally rehearsed your entire routine a few times, focus on problem areas. Are there certain parts of your routine you're unsure about? Then focus on just those areas for a while.

As you continue with mental rehearsal, you might actually find your body reacting, moving almost as if you are really up on that stage. This is good. This means that, to your brain, this mental practice is almost as real as actual, physical practice would be.

The Benefits of Mental Rehearsal

The major benefit of mental rehearsal is confidence. Having spent so much time imagining yourself performing on that stage, you won't feel so nervous when it's actually time to do it.

And you won't worry about forgetting your routine. After mentally going through it, step-by-step, countless times, the chances of you forgetting any of it will be pretty slim.

Mental rehearsal not only increases the amount of “practicing” you are able to do before competition, it helps take your confidence level to new heights.

3 - Mental Imagery and Visualization

Daydreaming. Every athlete does it to one degree or another. You imagine yourself being declared the winner at a major competition. You imagine yourself standing on a stage and waving to a cheering crowd. You imagine yourself getting phone calls from print and television news magazines, all eager to interview you.

Some believe that this kind of “imagining” is all a waste of time. But, as many studies have shown, this kind of visualizing can actually help increase your chances of success.

What Is Visualization?

Visualization is imagining things the way you want them to be. Imagining that what you desire most is a reality.

What good is this? Well, more and more, experts have come to expect that your thoughts and feelings can have an affect on your outer life. The more you believe in something, the more certain you are that something can happen, the greater the chances that it *will* happen.

Speak to a few champion athletes. One thing many of them have in common is that, even before they won the big race or game or championship, they *believed* that it would happen. Not that it *could* happen but *would* happen.

Another thing many of them have in common is visualization. They visualized winning on a regular basis. And this created in them a belief that they would achieve their desired

outcome.

Does Visualization Really Work?

In a famous study, the performances of 4 groups of Olympic athletes were analyzed.

Group 1 focused on physical training, and didn't use any kind of mental training techniques.

Group 2 spent 75% of their time on physical training, and 25% of their time on mental training.

Group 3 went 50/50. Half of their time was spent on physical training, the other half on mental training.

And, finally, group 4 spent 75% of their time on mental training, and only 25% on physical training.

Well, guess which group performed better. You guessed it, group 4. The group of athletes that spent the least amount of time training physically, but the most amount of time using mental training techniques, like visualization.

Your thoughts really do have an affect on how you will perform...and whether or not you will succeed.

How to Visualize?

Every time you daydream, you are visualizing. But there are ways to make this technique even more effective.

Don't just imagine winning. Imagine how it will *feel*. Imagine your heart pounding. Imagine the smile on your face. Imagine the emotions you will be experiencing.

Also, don't imagine the experience as something you just hope will happen at some point in time. Imagine that it *is* happening. Try to experience it, like you are actually living in that moment.

Visualizing is a powerful mental strength technique. Use it correctly, and you won't just hope to win one day. Instead, you will come to believe that winning is inevitable. And that belief will take you that much closer to becoming a champion.

4 - Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal

Considering how crucial the things an athlete thinks and imagines can be to how they perform—and how successful they will be—it's no real surprise there are so many mental strengthening techniques that use mental imagery. You've already learned about mental rehearsal and visualization. Well, here's another one. Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal.

What Is Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal?

Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal (or VMBR) sort of takes Mental Rehearsal (a technique you learned about earlier) to the next level. Proponents of VMBR agree that imagining yourself going through your routine, step-by-step, can have amazing benefits. But the benefits are increased when you combine mental rehearsal with actual, physical practice. So, for example, you imagine yourself doing your poses, and then you do them.

How Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal Works

VMBR is a bit more involved than the other mental imagery techniques. In fact, there are three steps.

The first step is to relax your mind and body, putting yourself in a mental state in which the visualization can do the most good. Many use techniques like progressive muscle relaxation for this step. (Which will be described in a later chapter.)

The second step of VMBR is visualization, or mental rehearsal. You imagine yourself actually performing your routine, step-by-step, from beginning to end.

In the third and final step, you actually get up and physically do the routine, just as you imagined it.

Then, you can repeat the process.

The Benefits of Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal

Some of the benefits of VMBR are obvious. You get the benefits of physical practice and

mental rehearsal almost at the same time.

VMBR can also help you to improve both your physical and mental techniques. Visualizing your routine moments before you practice it can help cement it in your mind. By the same token, physically doing a routine before you visualize it can help make your mental rehearsal more accurate and detailed. And the more detailed your mental rehearsal is, the more effective it will be.

5 - Cognitive-Behavior Therapy

Our attitude, the way we think and feel about any situation, can have a major affect on how we perform in those situations. This is true in every area of our lives: At work. At school. At home. And it's also true when it comes to sports.

The way a figure or fitness competitor feels about every aspect of their sport—from their training and work outs, to their diet, to actually competing—can really make a difference between standing on the winner's podium and missing the mark. It stands to reason that, the better you feel about being a competitor, and all that goes with it, the more successful you will be.

And that's what Cognitive-Behavior Therapy is all about.

Cognitive-Behavior Therapy

Think about it. Who is more likely to stick to their workout schedule? The competitor who hates every moment they spend in the gym, and views working out as a necessary evil they would skip if they could? Or the person who likes working out, and actually looks forward to going to the gym?

Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (or CBT) attempts to change your attitude, the way you think and feel, about something. CBT might not be able to make you outright love every moment you spend working out with every fiber of your being. But CBT can help you stop hating it so much that you dread doing it enough to start avoiding it.

However, changing the way you feel about something isn't always easy. That's why Cognitive-Behavior Therapy is a five stage process.

Stage One

The first stage of CBT is problem identification. The athlete takes a good, hard look at themselves and their training routines, and pinpoints the areas where they can make improvements.

This is really helpful for competitors who have become convinced they won't improve. Maybe they've been stuck on a certain level for a while, and don't think they can get any better no matter how hard they try. Maybe they've been told they've reached their absolute peak, they are the best they will ever be, and making any real improvements is impossible for them.

By doing an evaluation of every aspect of themselves and their training, a competitor can see that there actually *are* things they can do to improve. And it's not just some formless desire or pipe dream. They can see, with their own eyes, that there are real, concrete things they can do to get better, and achieve greater success in their sport.

Stage Two

The second stage is commitment. The competitor has to want to change their attitudes and behavior. They also have to believe that making these changes will make a real difference. And they have to be committed to doing whatever they have to do (working out, eating right, practicing their routines) to reach their goal of being a champion.

Stage Three

Stage three is where you actually start changing your attitudes and behavior.

In stage three, you can actually use many of the mental strengthening techniques we've already talked about (like visualization and mental rehearsal) as well as some we'll get to later (like positive self-talk) to make attitude adjustments.

For example, a good first step is to start paying attention to any negative thoughts you have about any aspect of being a figure or fitness competitor, and learn to cut them off at the pass.

Let's return to the working out example. You've decided you hate working out. And, while you're working out, you have a running, internal monolog about how much you hate it, how much you'd rather be doing anything else, how much you can't wait for it to be over. And all of these thoughts make you hate working out even more. They also make the time you spend in the gym drag by.

The thing about having negative thoughts is that we often aren't even aware we're doing it. CBT encourages you to become aware of those thoughts, and to cut them off. You don't have to start telling yourself you just love being in the gym working out if that's not how you really feel. But, instead of thinking about how much you hate it, think of something more pleasant (the new outfit you just bought for yourself) or neutral (the things you have to buy when you go grocery shopping). This will not only make the time go by faster, but you'll find you don't dread going to the gym as much as you used to.

Stage Four

Stage four of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy is changing your environment. Surrounding yourself with people who will be supportive and encouraging, and avoiding people who might try to discourage you and belittle your sport.

Of course, the latter isn't always possible. Your sister might not take you seriously as a fitness or figure competitor, but you don't want to stop hanging out with her because of it. In this case, you have to learn not to let the attitudes or opinions of others have a negative affect on how you think about yourself or your sport. And surrounding yourself with supportive friends, family members and trainers will help offset the potential negative affect your not-so supportive relatives and acquaintances can have on you.

Stage Five

Stage five of CBT is to make your changed habits and attitudes permanent. To make your new, more positive outlook last a lifetime.

The way to do this is by applying CBT techniques to every aspect of your life. Not just your sport, but your work, your family life, even your hobbies. By doing this, not only will you become a better athlete, you will become a happier, more successful person all around.

6 - Self Talk

By now, the pattern is clear. Your thoughts can affect your reality. And your success as a fitness or figure competitor will, in part, depend on your thoughts, feelings and attitudes.

A lot of mental strengthening techniques ask you to do something specific to help change

and mold your thoughts. But this next technique asks you to stop yourself from doing something that could be holding you back.

Negative self talk.

What Is Self Talk?

Self-talk is all those things we say to ourselves throughout the day. And, for a lot of people, that self talk is negative.

"I'm such an idiot."

"I suck at this."

"I'll never be good enough to win a competition."

The thing is that, if you think something often enough, your subconscious will start to believe it. And your belief will start to affect your reality.

Studies have shown that children whose intelligence is belittled (by parents, peers, etc.), come to truly believe they aren't smart. As a result, they can end up having a tough time in school. But bring someone into their lives who encourages them, who tells them they are smart often enough for them to start to believe it, and their grades improve dramatically.

Self talk has the same effect. If you tell yourself often enough that you will never be good enough to win, you'll come to believe it so much that you won't. On the other hand, if you tell yourself you can and will win, you will start to believe that instead, and will dramatically increase your chances of success.

Dealing With Negative Self Talk

The thing about negative self talk is that, for some people, it's so habitual they don't even realize they are doing it. And how can you stop doing something when you don't even realize you've started?

So the first step to putting an end to negative self talk is to be aware, and to catch yourself when you start thinking negatively. One thing you could try is carrying a small notebook and pen around with you. Every time you have a negative thought, stop to write it down. You will be amazed by how many negative thoughts you actually have in any given day, and just how much time you spend putting yourself down.

Once you become aware that you are saying something negative to yourself, stop it immediately. Writing the negative thought down can actually help with this. Another thing that might be helpful is some kind of mental cue. Imagine the sound of a door slamming on that negative thought. Or the sounds of tires squealing as you slam the breaks on your negative thinking.

Another way to deal with negative self talk is to follow it through. For example, say that you find yourself thinking, "I'll never win!" several times a day. Well, try turning that thought into a problem that can be solved.

When you find yourself thinking, "I'll never win!" turn it around and ask yourself, "Well, what can I do to increase my chances of winning?" Then, consider some possible solutions. (Working out more, changing your routine, changing your diet.) Having real, concrete solutions—things you can actually do to solve your problem—takes some of the power out of negative self talk.

Finally, you want to change negative self talk into positive self talk. People spend a lot of time putting themselves down, dwelling on all of their flaws, faults and shortcomings. Rarely do we compliment ourselves, pat ourselves on the back, or allow ourselves to feel proud for doing every-day things well.

So develop a positive self talk habit. Get used to saying things to yourself like:

"That was a good workout."

"I did great at practice today."

"I'm so proud of myself for not giving into temptation and breaking my diet."

Positive self talk will help to build your self-confidence. And confidence will help to make you a champion.

7 - Eliminating Negative Thinking

There's a famous saying.

"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're probably right."

This saying illustrates just how powerful thoughts are. If you think you can't do something, you will have a much harder time accomplishing it. On the other hand, if you truly believe you *can* do something, your road to success will be much smoother.

The previous chapter showed you some techniques you can use to eliminate negative self talk. This chapter looks at even more ways you can eliminate negative thoughts.

Cut Them Off

The next time you find yourself thinking negatively, stop it. Just stop. It can be easier said than done but, once you are aware of a negative thought, do anything you can to put a stop to it. Think of something more pleasant. Sing your favorite song in your head. Do whatever you can to get out of the habit of thinking negatively.

Label Them

A lot of the problem with negative thoughts is that we don't challenge them. They pop into our heads, damage our self-confidence, and pop back out again.

So, start challenging your negative thoughts.

For example, say you've missed a few days of working out. So your negative thoughts might be something along the lines of, "I'm so lazy!"

But are you really lazy? Think of what being lazy really means. It would mean that you never do anything productive. But have you been going to work? Taking care of your family? Shopping for groceries? Running errands for friends? Then you are hardly lazy.

Then ask yourself why you've been missing your workouts. Maybe the other areas of your life have gotten so hectic, you're just too tired to go to the gym. Or maybe you don't like working out on your own anymore, and could benefit from having a partner or trainer. Or maybe you don't like your exercise routine, and could do with a change.

The point is, don't just let a negative thought go unchallenged. If you challenge and analyze it, you can take the wind right out of its sails.

Exaggerate Them

Another way to take the power out of a negative thought is by exaggerating it.

Say your negative thought is, "I'm so lazy!" As soon as you have this negative thought, say to yourself, "Oh, I'm lazy alright. I'm so lazy I spend all day lounging around in bed, while little dogs dressed in neon pink togas fan me and feed me grapes and chocolates. And monkeys, wearing chefs hats, do all of the cooking. And (insert name of hot

celebrity of your choice) is my personal servant, doing all of my shopping and housecleaning, running all of my errands, and waiting on me hand and foot so I never have to get out of bed. In fact, when I do have to actually get up, they sling me over their shoulder and carry me so I don't have to walk. And, any minute now, a big dump truck is going to pull up to my house and dump millions of dollars on my front lawn, so I'll never have to work again. And..."

You get the idea. And the more outrageous and ridiculous you can make it, the better.

When you exaggerate a negative thought, it stops being something your subconscious takes seriously enough for it to damage your confidence or self esteem. Instead, it becomes something silly that you can laugh off.

Counteract Them

Probably the simplest thing you can do about negative thoughts is counteract them.

Counteract, "I'm so lazy!" with "Of course I'm not lazy. Look at everything I do every day."

Counteract, "I'll never win!" with, "Of course I'll win, if I work hard enough and do the right things."

Again, don't let a negative thoughts go unchallenged. Counteract it with the opposite, positive thought.

Put Affirmations to Good Use

Just as thinking negative thoughts often enough can make you start believing them, you will start to believe positive thoughts if you think them often enough.

Many people have certain affirmations, mantras that they say to themselves over and over again to keep them going and keep their confidence high. Some possible affirmations are:

"I know I can do it!"

"I believe in myself!"

"I have what it takes to be a winner!"

"I will be a champion!"

Develop some positive affirmations of your own that you can say to yourself whenever you think to do it. Say them to yourself often enough and you will begin to believe.

8 - Biofeedback

Have you ever thought you had a fever? If so, you probably took your temperature with a thermometer to make sure. And, if it turned out you did have a fever, you probably took steps to make it go away, like taking aspirin.

This is actually a very basic form of biofeedback.

What Is Biofeedback?

With biofeedback, machines are used to measure your bodily functions (like heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension). And, depending on what those readings are, you can take conscious steps to change them, which can help to improve both your health and your performance as a figure or fitness competitor.

Biofeedback in Action

In a study, long distance runners were put through a six week program. For six weeks, they spent time training on a treadmill. During this training, they were able to see the data from machines that were measuring their heart rate and ventilation, among other things. Knowing what their optimal readings should be for the best running performance, they were able to consciously make adjustments to achieve those readings. As a result, their running efficiency improved dramatically.

Biofeedback and Relaxation

One way biofeedback can really help athletes is by conditioning them to achieve a state of calm and relaxation, even in stressful situations, like competition.

It's surprising how hard relaxing can really be. Our muscles often tense up without our even realizing it, which can have a profound effect on how we perform.

There are machines that can measure the amount of tension in your muscles. Every time a muscle tenses up, the machine will register it and alert you, maybe with a flashing light or beeping sound. This will let you know when you are tensing up, and that you need to consciously take steps to relax those muscles again.

After a while, you'll be able to achieve the same results away from the machine. You yourself will be aware of when your muscles are tensing up. And, as you make a conscious effort to relax them, you'll also feel yourself feeling calmer and less anxious.

The Benefits of Biofeedback

Biofeedback can help competitors in many ways. It can help them to improve their form and overall health. It can help them heal more quickly after an injury. And it can help them achieve the calm, relaxed confidence so often found in a champion.

9 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Having a case of the nerves sounds harmless enough. But an athlete knows just how damaging nerves can be. One of the side effects of nerves is tense muscles. When your muscles tense up, it can affect your performance. Stiff muscles make it hard to move with grace and fluidity.

Nervousness can also affect your mental state. When you feel your muscles tensing up, or feel your arms and legs start to shake, you might start doubting your ability to give a winning performance. And those doubts can shake your confidence, the very thing you need to win.

One technique you can use to both relax tense muscles and calm your nerves is Progressive Muscle Relaxation.

What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation?

When doing Progressive Muscle Relaxation (or PMR), you consciously tense and relax every major muscle in your body, one at a time. This technique teaches you to not only recognize when your muscles are tensing up, but to consciously relax those muscles at will.

PMR has two main benefits. The first, and most obvious, is learning to consciously relax your body and loosen tight muscles. And, secondly, PMR helps you to relax mentally. Focusing on doing PMR takes your mind off of your nerves, and helps you to feel more calm and less anxious.

How to Do Progressive Muscles Relaxation?

Doing Progressive Muscle Relaxation is actually pretty simple.

First, you sit in a comfortable chair, close your eyes, take several deep breaths, and relax your body as much as possible. Then, starting at the top of your head and working your way down, you tense and relax the muscles in your body. You open your mouth as wide as possible, hold this position for 10 seconds, then let it relax. You pull your shoulders back, hold the position for 10 seconds, hold this position for a few seconds, and then let them relax. You clench your hands into fists, keep them clenched for 10 seconds, and then let them relax. And so on and so forth until you reach your toes.

It's recommended that you start at the top of your head (with your facial muscles) and work your way down. Possibly in this order:

1. Eyes
2. Mouth
3. Tongue
4. Neck
5. Shoulders
6. Hands
7. Biceps
8. Triceps
9. Back
10. Stomach
11. Buttocks
12. Thighs
13. Calves
14. Feet
15. Toes

There's one thing you should keep in mind during PMR. If you have any pulled muscles, or if you have ever had a broken bone, you might want to skip those areas when doing PMR, at least until your doctor says it's okay.

Getting the Most Out of PMR

You should do at least one PMR sequence every day, until you feel you've gotten the hang of it. Once you have learned to recognize when your muscles are tensing up, and how to consciously make them relax again, you can do your PMR "set" 3 or 4 times a week.

The best thing about PMR is that you can do it anywhere. It works best if you can sit or lie down and get comfortable. But, even in situations where that isn't possible, you can still use PMR techniques to help relax your muscles, calm your nerves, and prepare yourself to perform at your best.

10 - Meditation

As you've already seen, many mental strengthening techniques rely on developing self-awareness. You have to become aware of when you are having negative thoughts so you can stop them. You have to learn to recognize when your muscles are tensing up so you can relax them.

Meditation is a technique that can help to increase your self-awareness. It can also help you to be more relaxed and calm.

What Is Meditation?

Meditation helps you to relax and achieve a state of inner calm, both of which can help to improve any athlete's performance. And meditation can help to improve your performance in other ways.

For example, say there is one part of your routine that always gives you trouble. But you don't want to cut this part out because it's a great move, and will increase your chances of winning at your next competition.

By meditating on the problem, you might discover the underlying cause. (When you did the move once, you came very close to seriously injuring yourself, and your subconscious reluctance to do this potentially dangerous move again is throwing you off.) And, once you realize what the problem is, you can start taking the steps you need to take to solve it.

How to Meditate?

There are countless meditation techniques available to you, and different techniques can serve different purposes. But here's one simple meditation technique you can try right now.

Set a timer to go off in 20 minutes. Now, sit in a quiet place. Relax, breathe deeply and steadily, and clear your mind. Now, focus on one thought. (For example, "I believe in myself," or "I believe I have what it takes to win.") Keep your mind focused on this one thought, and push away any stray, outside thoughts that try to intrude.

As simple as it sounds, meditation can be difficult to master. But daily practice will help you to improve, and begin to reap the benefits meditation has to offer.

Conclusion

You have done so much, dedicated so much time and energy, to succeeding as a fitness or figure competitor. Instead of going to concerts or movies or watching TV, you spend much of your free time working up. You've given up many of your favorite foods in favor of a strict diet designed to keep you in the best shape possible. You've invested a great deal of time and money in the things you need to succeed, including hiring coaches and trainers, buying the right outfits, perfecting your routines, and preparing for competitions.

After all of that, it would be a shame to ignore the final piece of the puzzle, developing the mental skills that can help push you to the next level.

You don't have to try to use all of the mental strengthening techniques you've read about. Instead, pick the one that you like the most, and that seems like it would be the most beneficial. You'll be amazed what a difference even one of these techniques can make. Before long, you will have the confidence, mental strength, and *belief in yourself* that you need to become a champion.

To Your Success and Inner Strength,



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>>>PS: Would you like a complimentary consultation? For more info visit

<http://warriormindskillsession.com>