



# Music and the Mind

PJP 2020



## Questions to ask yourself?

Are you maximising your own motivation?

Are you reflecting on your musical development?

Do you manage your work and time well?

Do you develop your own skills effectively?



## **A week before a performance**

Do you look and feel confident leading up to a performance?

Are you organised leading up to the performance?

Do you know where you will perform and what the venue looks like?



Do you have goals in the week leading up to the performance?

Do you feel relaxed and calm?

Are you handling your emotions about the upcoming performance well?

Do you have a routine to start your performance?

Are your thoughts helping you to prepare for the performance?



## Before, During and After

Do you sleep well the night before a performance?

Do you know what to eat and drink prior to a performance?

Do you remember your performance piece and items needed?

Do you always adopt a helpful posture and pre-performance behaviours?



Are you good at focussing your attention before a performance?

Do you handle nerves well before performing?

Do you have an effective routine to follow before performing?

Do you handle your emotions well before a performance?



Do you look confident at the start of a performance?

Do you know how to cope effectively if a performance doesn't go to plan?

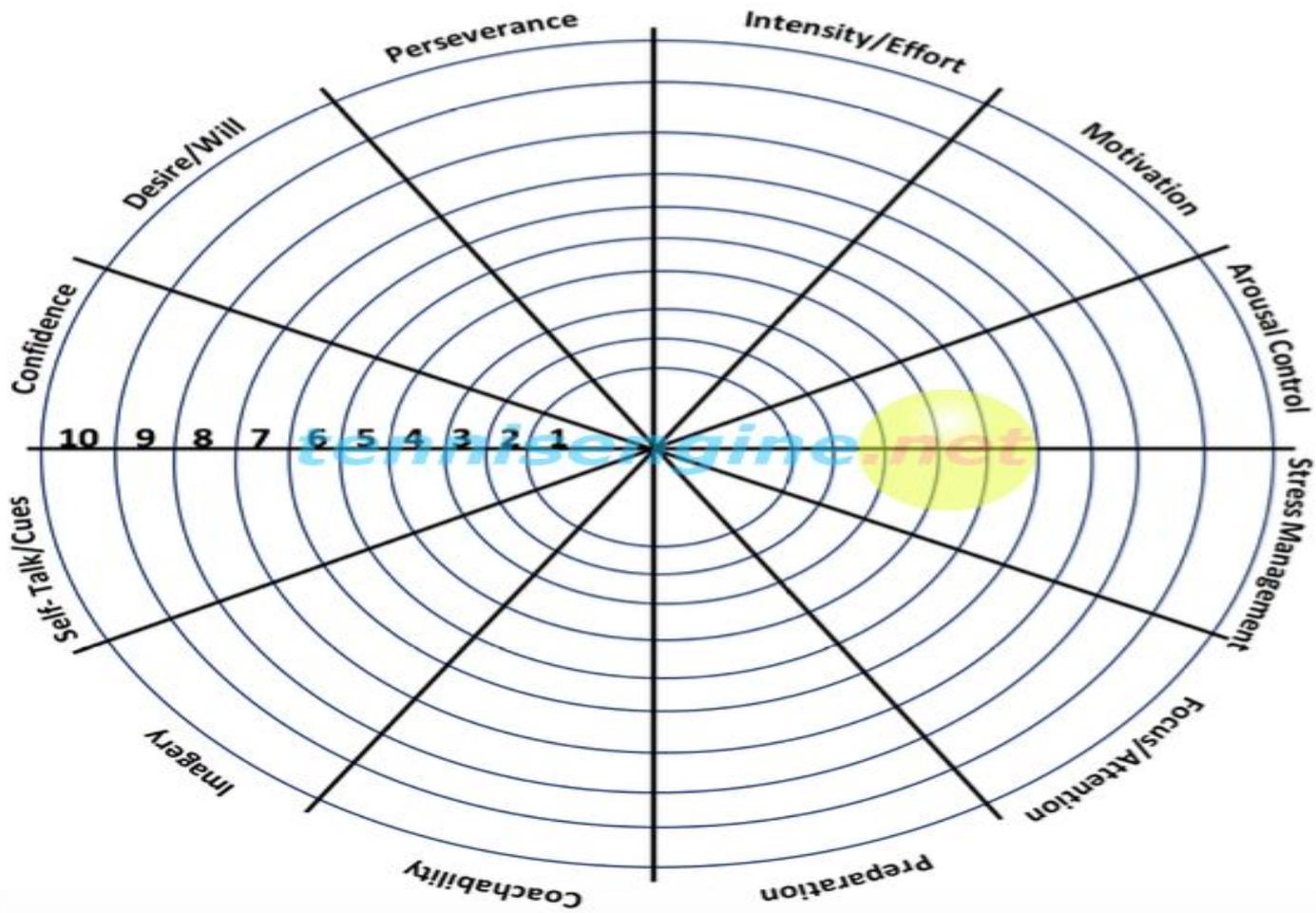
Do you know how to effectively evaluate your performance afterwards?



## Exercise

What qualities or skills (soft skills) are important in order to sustain a performing career?

Pick your top 10 - Map them on wheel

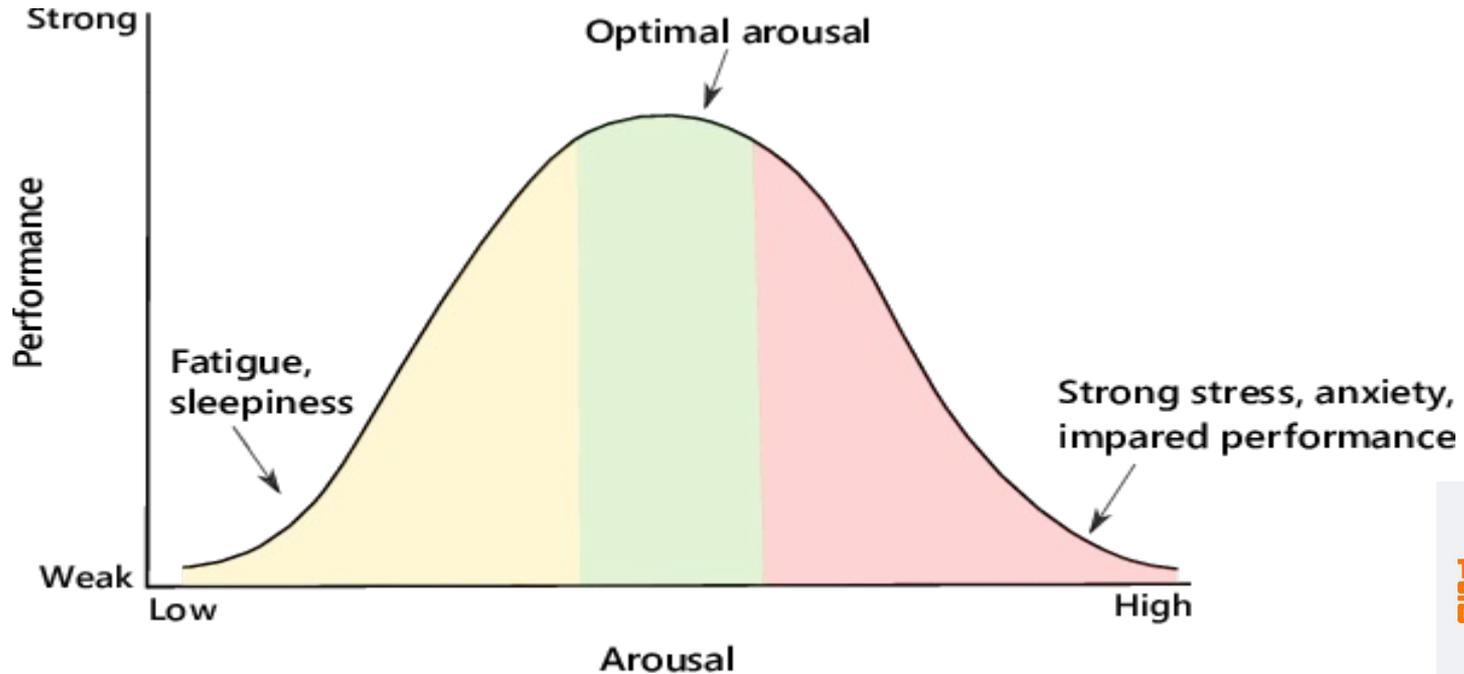




# Inventories - Where are you now?

Wheel of life (see handout)

# How do we achieve Peak Performance?





## Factors that influence how we experience performance stress

- Personality
- Fear of Failure
- Expectations - goal setting (process rather than outcome goals)



# Personality

- There is a strong relationship between personality and performance anxiety (Arneson 2010; Meharg, 1988).
- Personality can also influence the appraisal of MPA as facilitating or debilitating (Kubzansky & Stewart, 1999)
- Langendorfer, Hodapp, Kreutz, and Bongard, (2006) found that personality traits related directly to the prevalence of performance anxiety among orchestral musicians.
- Fairburn et al. (2003) maintained that clinical perfectionism leads to an individual's sense of self-worth being closely linked with the individual's ability to accomplish and meet challenging goals.
- Abril (2007) stated that MPA may originate from past negative experiences. He claims that music teachers and family members exert a great influence regarding the musician's identity and his/her musical ability.

- 
- Meharg (1988) believed that parents and teachers contributed to performance anxiety by placing unrealistic expectations on music students.
  - Perhaps the reason artists/musicians may have more pronounced personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism) could be due to the pressure and stress of early intervention from parents and teachers.
  - A study by Schlenker, Weigold and Hallam (1990) showed that individuals with high self-esteem did not let failure affect their self perception, whereas individuals with low self-esteem experienced a decline in how they rated their own ability after experiencing failure.

# Fear of Failure - motivation

Two Sides of the Same Coin  
Desire Cannot Exist Without Fear

"I want to succeed."  
**DESIRE**  
to fulfill  
the attachment

"I don't want to fail."  
**FEAR**  
the attachment  
will not be fulfilled

All fears & anxieties are mirror images of your desires  
Rooted in your attachments • Fed by your identifications



# Expectations - motivation

- **Outcomes, or Results:** Expectations related to the outcome of a competition or exam.
- **The Quality of My Performance:** What you expect your performance should look and feel like. “I should not make any stupid mistakes.”
- **Mental Game:** Expectations about how you think you should behave during competition. “I should always stay composed and not get upset.”
- **What Others Expect of Me:** What you think others expect of you. “Other people expect me to win.”



# What to do?

Focus on **Process Goals**, Not Expectations

Mental Game Assessment (see Expectations handout)

# Stress - What is it?





# Fight, Flight or Freeze

When bad things happen.. React or respond?

What happens to you when you get nervous or stressed? In your body, your mind, your actions?

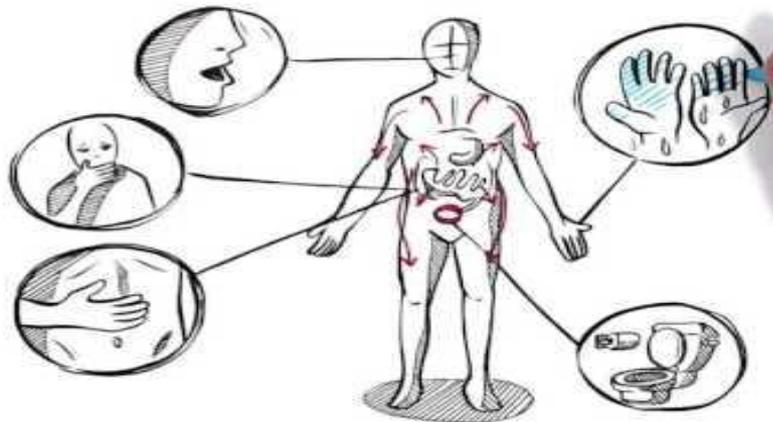
Animation clip - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc30\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc30_5M) - for kids

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG\\_-Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG_-Q) - for adults

# For young people



# For adults





# WHY?

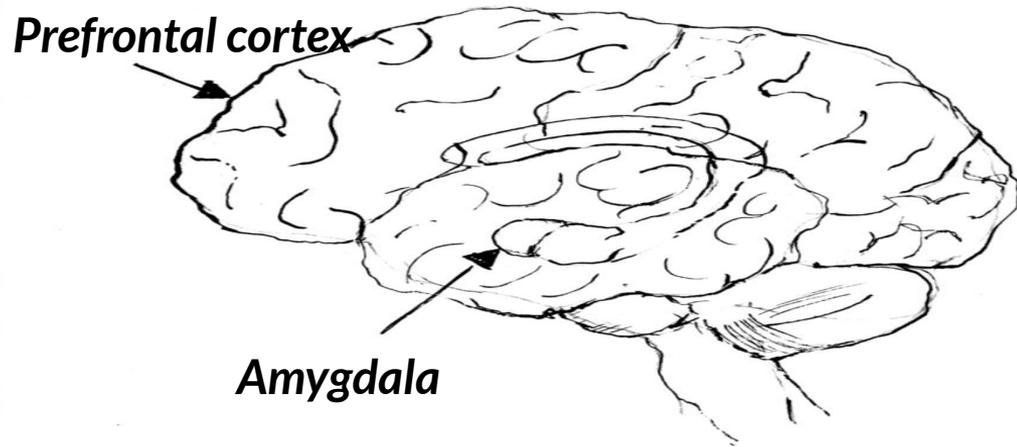
**Our brains were built for survival**

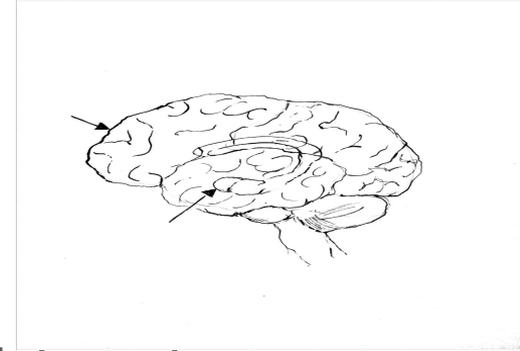
**Primary function of the mind is to help keep us alive by trying to anticipate threats and danger**

**Our attention is hijacked by anything we see as a threat**

**Today we over-think - thoughts speed up and become repetitive - we catastrophize!**

**Our ancestors needed this skill to plan ahead and prepare for the worst.. It can be unhelpful for us.**





**Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)** - front of the brain - helps us concentrate, make choices and decisions, notice what's going on around us

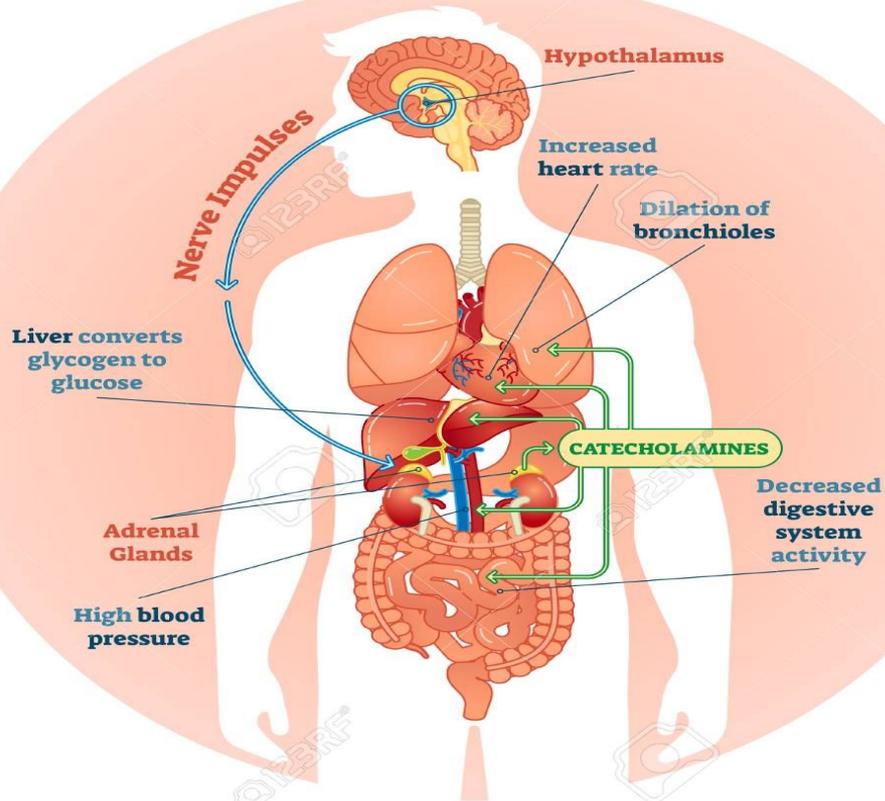
**Amygdala** - designed for survival

When the amygdala is activated, we don't process through the PFC

Fuel physical action... modern stressors triggers mental activity- we don't burn up our stress hormones

No 'camp- fire' time,

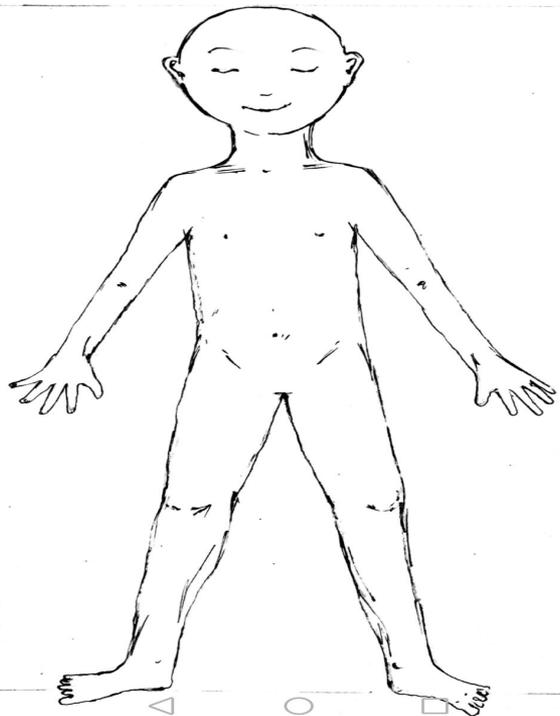
# STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM



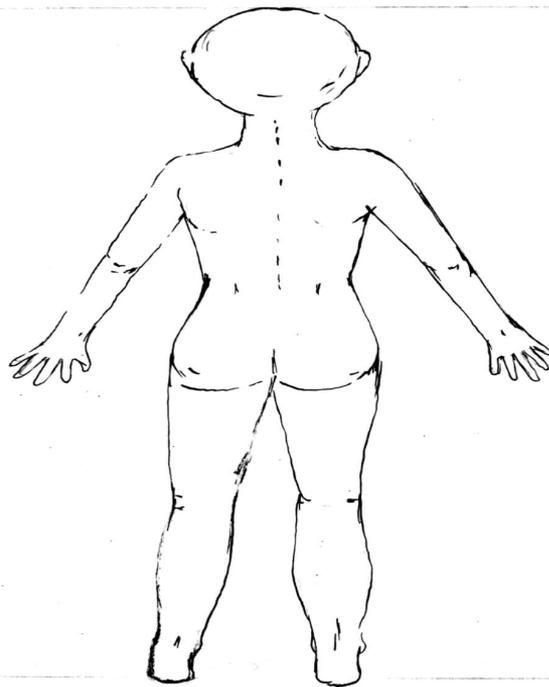
# Where in your body do you feel stress?

— What is your stress signature?

Front



Back





## What to do when stress arises?

- Turn towards the feeling of stress; make friends with them
- Breathe with the feelings of stress ‘What you can breathe with you can be with’
- Drop your attention to the lower half of your body, drop your anchor

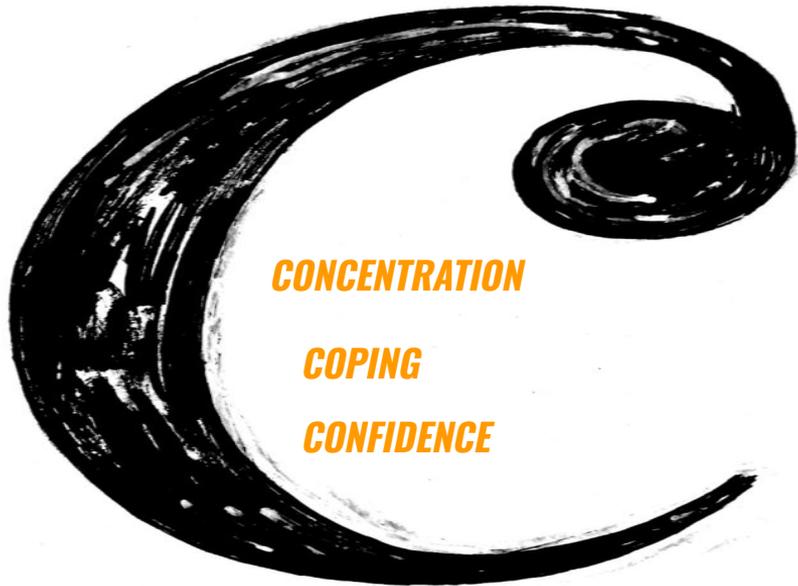


## Strategies to deal with performance stress

- Mindfulness
- Cognitive restructuring
- Pre-performance routines
- Imagery/visualisation

*Otherwise known as Mental Skills Training*

# MENTAL SKILLS TRAINING - the 3 C's



**CONCENTRATION**

**COPING**

**CONFIDENCE**



- **Concentration**(Thought stopping, imagery, mindfulness)
- **Coping** (Control, coping strategies, evaluation, expectations, goals)
- **Confidence** (Highlight list, take action, be your best self, affirmations, perception (C or T?))



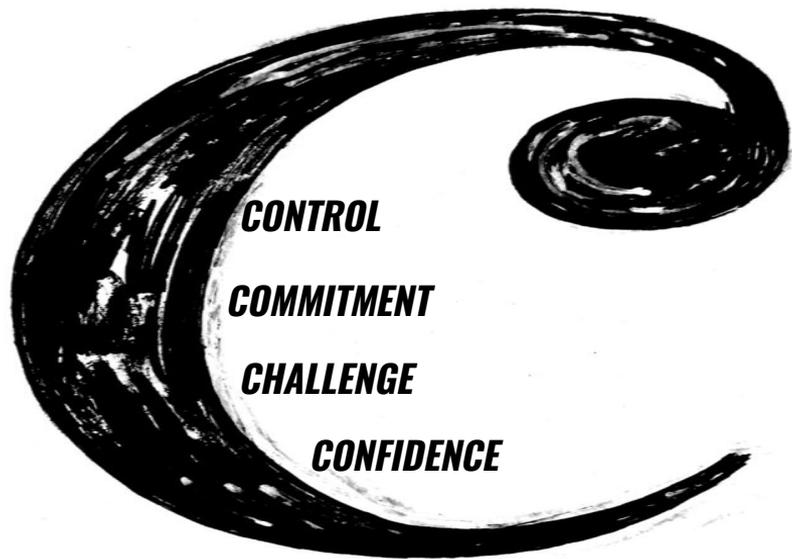
## How we use the 3 C's

- **Mental maps** - Goal setting -SMART, Self Talk (park and replace)
- **Mental moods** - PMR, Mindfulness
- **Mental movies** - Imagery/Visualisation
- **Mental moves** - Pre-performance routines



## **Mental Toughness or Mental Resilience**

“the ability to cope with pressure... to rebound from failure, a determination to persist in the face of adversity and a form of mental resilience”



**CONTROL**

**COMMITMENT**

**CHALLENGE**

**CONFIDENCE**

***Physical, Mental and Emotional Toughness***



# To develop in our students

## Control

‘the ability to feel and act as if one could exert an influence in the situation.’

**Commitment** “the tendency to take an active role in events.”

Responsibility, Identity, Role, Attachment, Commitment



**Challenge** “view challenges as opportunities to grow and develop rather than as threats.”

- “Next Time”
- Long-Term View
- Internalise Competitiveness

**Confidence**

“a strong sense of self-belief.”



# The Performance Pyramid

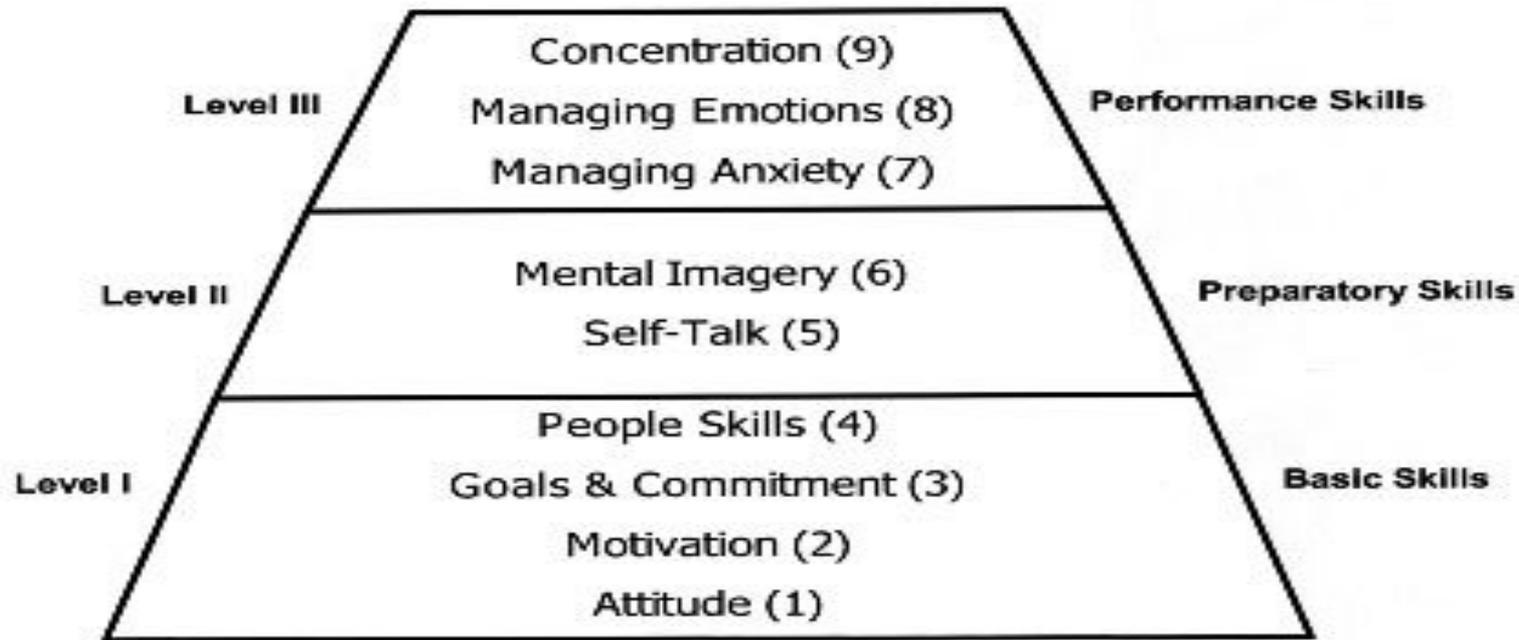
- The performance pyramid presented by Dr Jack J. Lesy at the Ohio Center for Sports Psychology creates a framework for the content and focus of delivering psychology interventions.
- The pyramid represents the relationship of the nine mental skills to one another. Each of the higher levels incorporates the skills of the preceding levels.



**Level I** - These mental skills constitute a **broad base for attaining long-term goals, learning, and sustaining daily practice.** They are needed on a day-by-day basis for long periods of time, often months and years.

**Level II** - These skills are used **immediately before performance to prepare for performance.** They may be used just before competition begins, or immediately before a specific performance action.

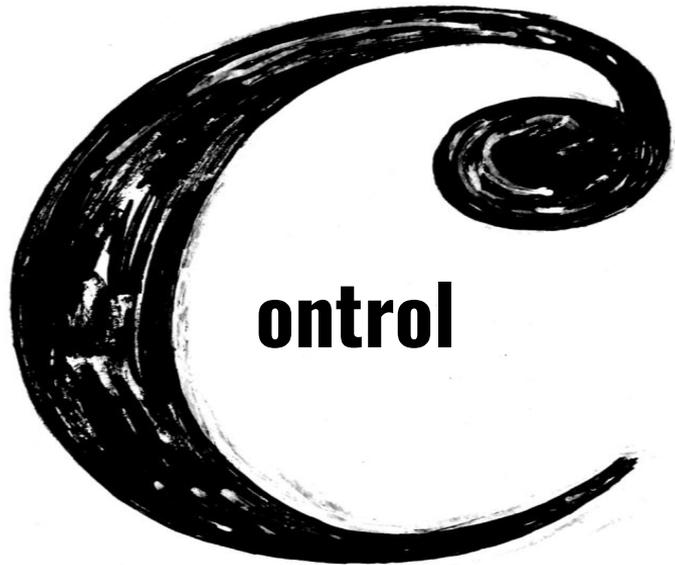
**Level III** - These skills are used **during actual performance behaviour.**





# Goal Setting

- Outcome Goals - Control Level = Low
- Performance Goals- Control Level = Medium to High
- Process Goals-Control Level = High
- *Goal Setting Handout*



**ontrol**

***EFFORT  
ATTITUDE  
RESPONSE***

**= YES**

# Attitude

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KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CARRY  
ON

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## Be kind to yourself

Don't be so hard on yourself

Notice the automatic criticism and put downs, then start to be more understanding and compassionate

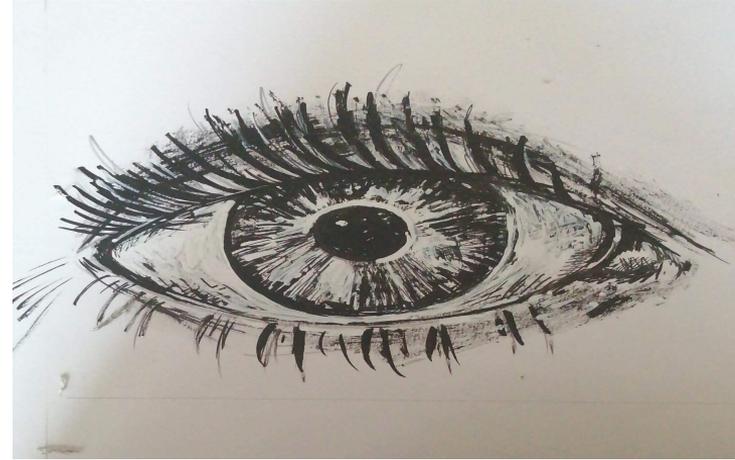
Treat yourself the way you would treat your friends in the same situation

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# Mindfulness

- Everything you see
- Everything you hear
- Everything you taste, smell, touch, feel
- Everything you experience is filtered through your mind

**The mind and body are connected**





What happens when you feel nervous about a performance? (butterflies, sweaty palms, dry mouth?)

What happens when you are scared? (heart rate increases)

***The mind and body are connected very closely***

We investigate and observe physical sensations - through mindfulness

**Present moment experience - flow - be right here now**



## ***You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf***

Think of your mind as the surface of a lake or an ocean. There are always waves on the water, sometimes big, sometimes small, sometimes almost imperceptible.

The water's waves are churned up by winds, which come and go and vary in direction and intensity, just as do the winds of stress and change in our lives, which stir up waves in our mind. It's possible to find shelter from much of the wind that agitates the mind.

Whatever we might do to prevent them, the winds of life and of the mind will blow.

**"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf" (Kabat-Zinn 2004)**



***'Yesterday is history***

***Tomorrow is a mystery***

***But today is a gift***

***And that's why it is***

***called the present'***

**STOP  
FEEL YOUR FEET  
FEEL YOUR BREATHING  
PAUSE**

**Pause**



# Pause

- Pause is all about possibilities
- Your brain is something you can train
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQxTUQhVbg4>
- Where is your mind?
- You can train it to be in the present moment
- How?
- Stop, feel your feet, feel your breathing, Pause



- Using Pause
- Relieves stress, performance anxiety and worry
- Will help you flourish!
- Feel calm and connected - ‘flow’





# Attention

It works like a torch/spotlight

We can direct our attention

Our attention can be hijacked by what is immediate and distracting

Monkey mind- Headspace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxyVCip48S4>



# Monkey Mind

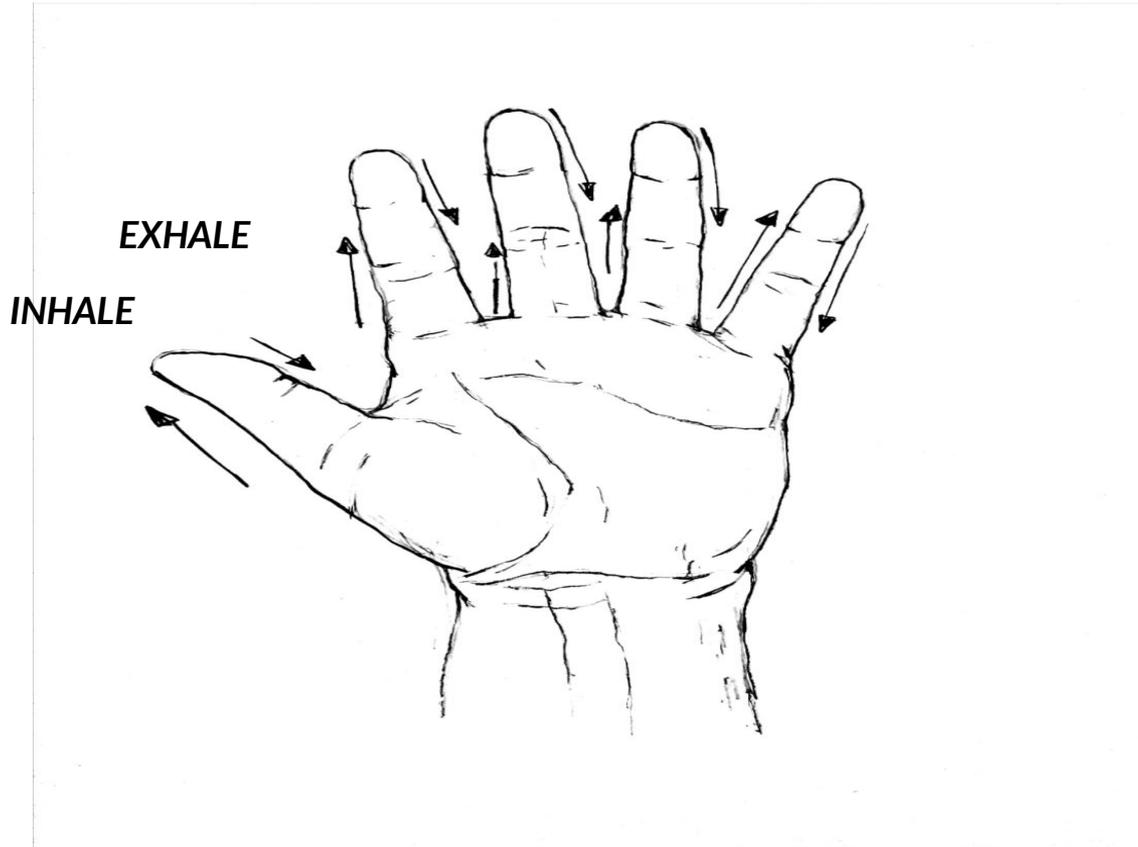




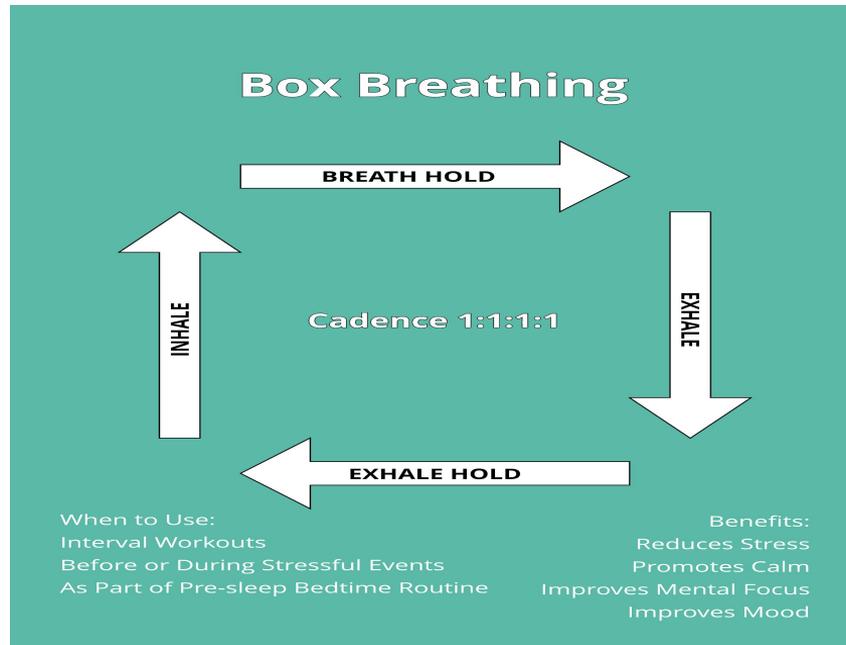
## Strategies to help stabilise our attention

- Finger breathing
- Box Breathing
- Pause - Feet, Weight of body on chair, Sensations of breathing
- Calm the mind by anchoring it to the body

# TAKE 5/FINGER BREATHING



# Box Breathing

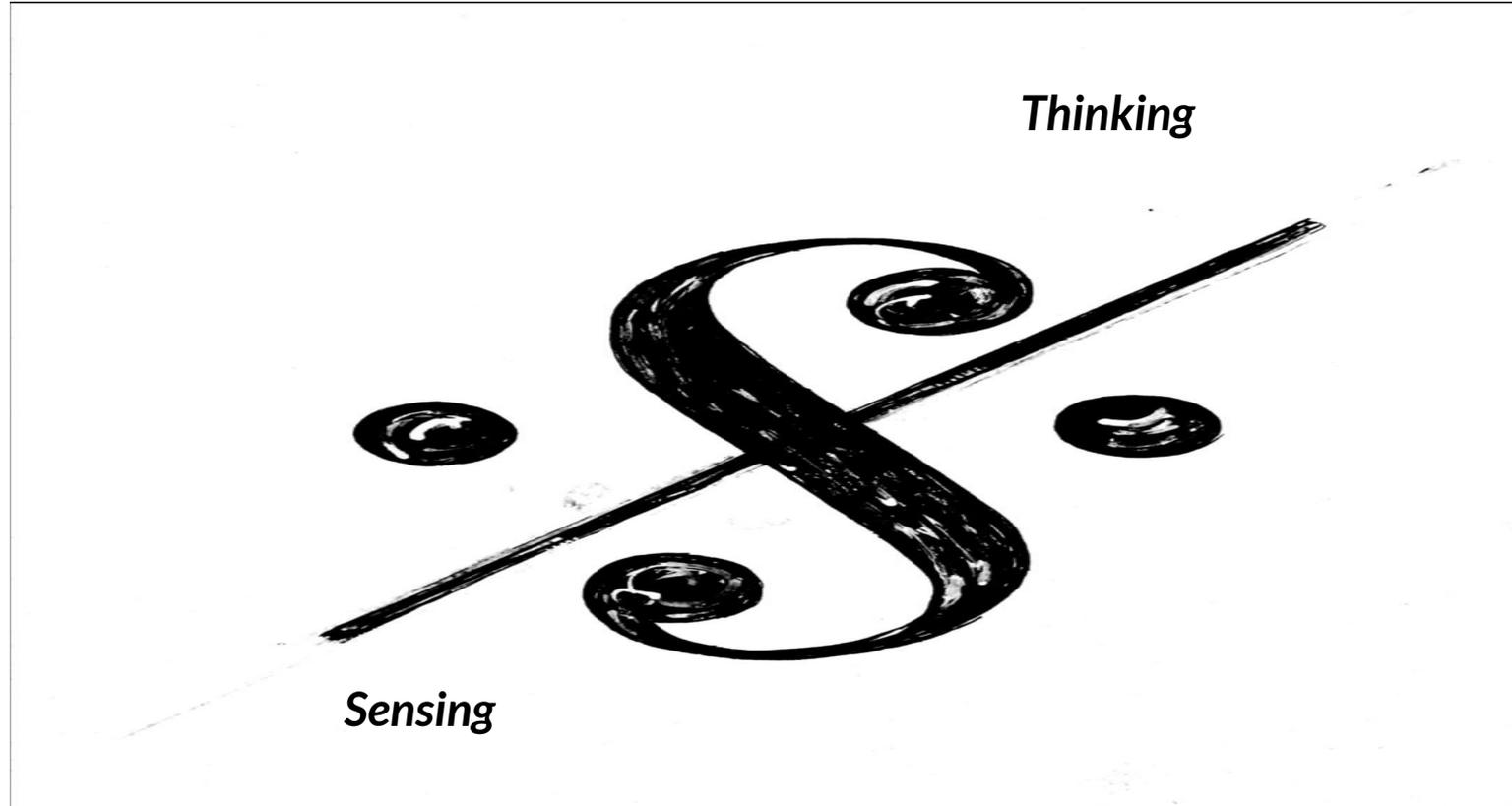




# Worry

- Two modes of mind - Thinking and Sensing
- Through Centering we switch from a 'Thinking Mode' of mind to a 'Sensing Mode' of mind - worksheet
- Musicians tend to 'think' due to continuous instruction
- The mind tells stories - use example (audition panel, audience member, parent)

# Two Modes of Mind



## CENTERING



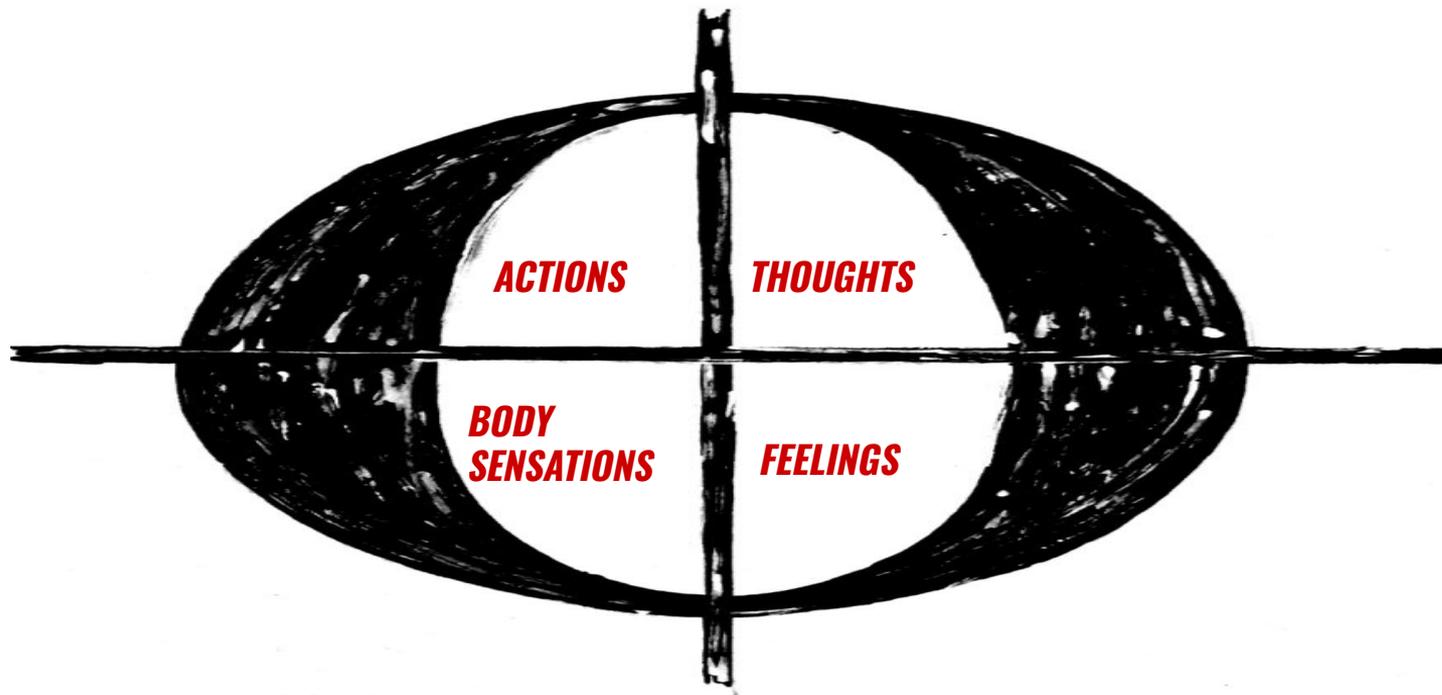
When we are worried or anxious our body can get tense and we need to 'steady' ourselves.

Centering/+2 practice/ Rhythmic breathing or 7/11 breathing is a very portable tool to get the heart rate down and steady ourselves when the seas get stormy.



## THE CODA EXPERIENCE

- The Coda experience - 4 dimensions work together and feed each other
- 1 thought - trigger emotion or mood
- Leads to impulse or urge to make a mistake, freeze or lose focus
- Another thought or emotion is triggered
- Leads to another body sensation.. And so it continues...





# Exercise

Think of a scenario where your mind began to tell you stories

Any thoughts that came to you?

Any sensations in the body?

A mood or emotion?

An action in response to your mood?

**Coda worksheet**



## To conclude - Being here now

The mind is like Teflon for pleasant experiences and Velcro for unpleasant ones

Our reactions are 'automatic'

Mindfulness helps us choose to respond rather than react

In what situations would you react?

What physical sensations would they experience?



## IN THE ZONE or FLOW

- What does it look like? (effortless, graceful, connected, focused)
- How does it feel? (Calm, confident, flowing, no struggle)
- Practice, confidence, mindfulness, mental skills training
- Two modes of mind - Thinking and Sensing
- Flow = 'no mind' 'in the zone' 'fully present'
- Do a Pause



# Thought Traffic

How is the traffic of your mind?

Metacognition -step back and observe your thoughts and notice your thinking

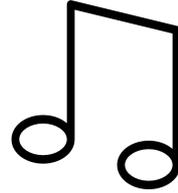
Take a seat at the roadside of our busy minds

# Thought Traffic





## THOUGHT NOTES



This is **NOT** about putting the thoughts away, but simply recognising them for what they are. We can practise not getting on-board a thought note, or choosing to get off if we find ourselves on-board.



Thought notes - positive and negative

The more you think a negative thought, the more you'll have that thought again

We can't stop the taxis coming.. But we can stay at the taxi rank and not get into the taxi

Try getting the student to start observing their thought traffic during performance and practise - encourage them to take a step back - the movies of their mind

Do a Pause!



# The Brain

The human brain has 100 billion neurons (brain cells)

Each neuron is connected by synapses to about 10,000 other neurons

The more we have particular types of thoughts and feelings. This repetition creates stronger synaptic connections 'wider roads' - more likely to have this particular thought or feeling again

'Neurons that fire together wire together'



# Cognitive restructuring

## MANTRA

Statement or slogan repeated often - Calm, Confident, Focus

- 
- Use affirmations - positive self-talk statements
  - Fire the inner critic
  - Use the first person
  - Replace outcome thoughts with process thoughts
  - Focus on what you want, not what you don't want
  - Avoid what if's
  - 1-1-1 exercise (1 thing I did well, 1 thing that improved, 1 instance of great effort)



# Park and Replace

- Negative thought
- STOP (Sign, traffic light, hand)
- Replace with mantra
- The mind can only hold one thought at a time
- Ironic rebound theory
- Our subconscious mind does not process 'don't'
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMdjENuqVa0>

# Ironic Rebound Theory





# Cue Cards - visual aid

Key words can be a reminder or trigger

- Technique - (Centering, Park and Replace, Pause)
- Where are you on the performance curve (1-10)
- Your mantra

# Visual Aid

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**S**top! Pause for a moment

**T**ake a breath : one slow, deep breath

**O**bserve. Just notice your thoughts and feelings

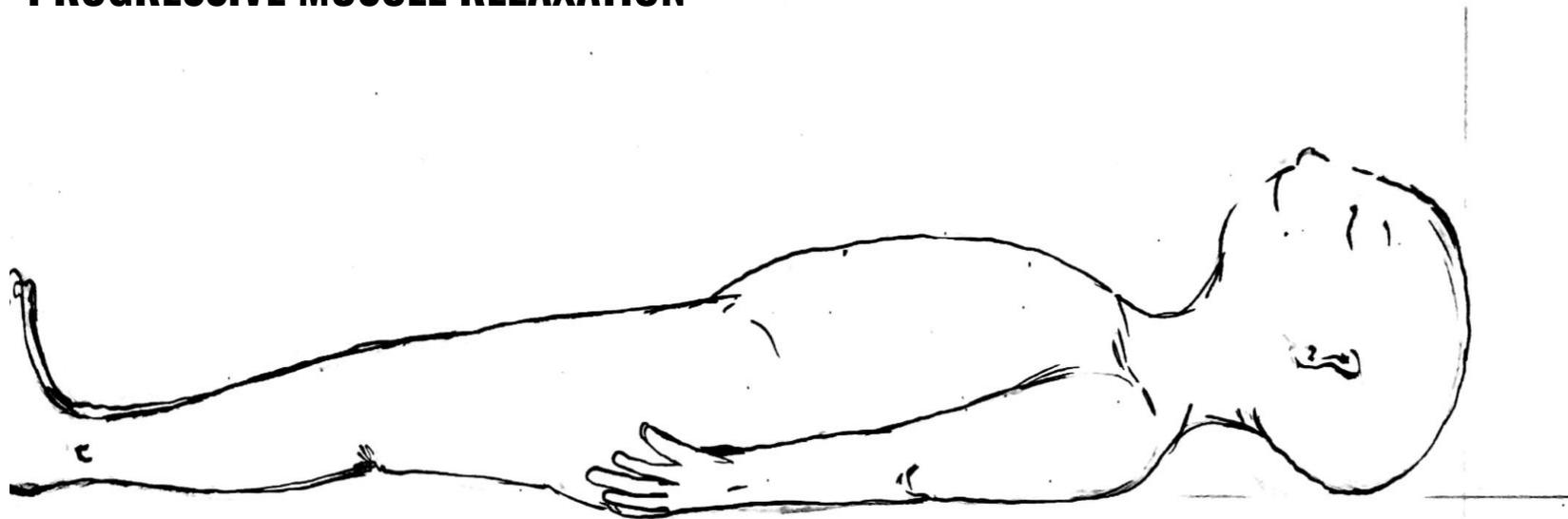
**P**ull back, put in some perspective. Consider the bigger picture.  
Is this fact or opinion? What's another way of looking at this?

**P**ractise what works. Consider your values. Do the best thing!  
Proceed.





## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION





# Pre Performance Routines

Visualisation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AibWrCkYVk>

# Visualisation





# RESEARCH STUDY

ALAN RICHARDSON

# TRACKING IMPROVEMENTS TO BASKETBALL FREE THROWS

- 
- Group A - Practised free throws 20 mins daily
  - Group B - Visualised making free throws 20 mins daily
  - Group C - Nothing at all
  - RESULT - GROUP B IMPROVED 23% in 20 days (1% less than Group A -improved 24%)



## Visualisation

- When we visualise we actually stimulate the same brain regions as you do when you physically perform the same task
- It is a way of conditioning your brain for successful outcomes

- 
- Practice
  - Visualise what you want
  - Shift perspective - associated/disassociated
  - Pump it up - paint with more colour, spinning the dial
  - Follow a system
  - Imagery script - write or follow guided one



# Resources

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Greene, D. (2002). Performance Success. New York: Routledge.

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Whitworth, L. (2007). Co-active coaching: New skills for coaching people toward success in work and life. Davies-Black Publishing.

Williams, M., & Penman, D. (2011). Mindfulness: a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world (Vol. 360). London: Piatkus.

Buswell, D. (2006). Performance Strategies for Musicians. UK: MX Publishing.



# Online Resources

The Bullet Proof Musician - <https://bulletproofmusician.com>

Beyond stage fright - <http://www.beyondstagefright.com>

The musicians way - <https://www.musiciansway.com>

The School of Performance - <http://theschoolofperformance.com>

<https://performancescience.ac.uk/performershealth/>



<http://musicalimpact.org/network/https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKuf52cLEX3MuT3aor9qLBw>

MindShift app - <https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-app>

<https://www.ism.org/images/files/ISM-Performance-anxiety.-A-practical-guide-for-music-teachers.pdf>



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