

Relaxation Training Plan

Phase 1

Athletes perform better when their muscles are loose and relaxed. In order to build self-awareness, it is important to become familiar with what a state of relaxation feels like. That is the first stage of relaxation training. You want to use the exercises below to try and get your body into deeper and deeper states of relaxation. Follow these exercises for two weeks.

Relaxation Training Exercises Phase 1

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (at least 3 times per week):
<https://youtu.be/ihO02wUzgkc>
- Diaphragmatic Breathing (watch this video once to learn the technique):
<https://youtu.be/eUlmEpgjZoA> (From beginning to 5:33)
 - Every night, lie in bed and do 10 diaphragmatic breaths as demonstrated in the video - try to feel as relaxed as possible
 - Add a cue word to your 10 daily breaths before going to sleep (e.g., breathe, relax, calm, chill)
- Goal: Achieve deeper and deeper states of relaxation and loose muscles. Associate a cue word with the relaxed state.

Phase 2

Once you have become more familiar with a relaxed state, you will want to bring that feeling to practice. Before practice and during any breaks, you will take one to three diaphragmatic breaths using your cue word from your nightly practice. Use these breaths and your cue word to induce a state of relaxed and loose muscles. With practice, you will be able to rapidly induce this state of relaxation. This phase should last one to two weeks.

Relaxation Training Exercises Phase 2

- Diaphragmatic breaths at practice with cue word
- Record your relaxation state and awareness in your training journal after each practice
- Continue with 10 daily diaphragmatic breaths before bed

Phase 3

At this point, you should be able to rapidly induce the relaxation state in practice. The next step is to do this for a competition. You will use the diaphragmatic breathing and your cue word as part of your pre-competition routine and your pre-performance routine.