

How to Develop a Productive Mindset: Mindset Portfolio

Your mindset impacts how you experience and interact with the world, others, and yourself. Inaccurate or counterproductive beliefs like “I’m unlovable,” “The world is against me,” or “I’ll never amount to anything” can sabotage your performance and well-being. Further, the confirmation bias can cause you to only notice, remember, and value the evidence that confirms your counterproductive beliefs, making them stronger and stronger over time.

If you have a desired core belief that would be more accurate and/or productive for your performance, well-being, and resilience, you can use this worksheet to gather evidence to develop it. The goal is to gather as much evidence as you can and then reflect on it regularly for at least 10–15 minutes each day until you feel you’ve formed your target mindset. Then you can return to it anytime you need a productive mindset boost. Try storing this information in a folder on your computer or phone. Or keep it in a binder or put it on a board that you see regularly.

The following categories are based on strategies to build a self-efficacy mindset—which is the belief you have the ability to overcome challenges to meet a specific goal—as well as strategies used to develop a growth mindset, stress mindset, and an optimistic mindset. While not all categories are appropriate for your target belief, the more meaningful, vivid, and detailed the evidence you collect, the more impactful this exercise will be in helping you form your target mindset.

Target mindset

Write down the belief that you want to develop.

Past experiences

You likely have a number of past experiences that provide evidence to support your target mindset. However, you’ll need to actively search for them because the confirmation bias makes it common for experiences that don’t fit your current beliefs to go unnoticed or be seen as the exception to the rule.

Brainstorm and make a list of past experiences that support your target mindset. Then collect pictures, awards, letters, coins, or symbols—or journal about them—

to help solidify these memories and make it rewarding to reflect on them regularly as you build your target mindset. If you can, share details about these experiences with others.

List past experiences that support your target mindset.

HPRC’s “Create a ‘Stress Helps Me’ Mindset” worksheet is an example of how you can use past experiences to build a mindset.



Vicarious experiences

Reflecting on stories and examples from others can help you form your target mindset too. Collect stories, songs, videos, pictures, etc., from others' experiences that provide evidence to support your target mindset. If possible, discuss these events with those who experienced them to make them more vivid and impactful.

List vicarious experiences that support your target mindset.

Verbal persuasion

Getting input or encouragement from others can provide evidence to help you build your target mindset. Collect feedback, emails, texts, voicemails, and letters. Or reach out to others and ask for targeted feedback that could provide proof to support your target mindset.

List evidence of verbal persuasion that supports your target mindset.

Imagery

Imagery is a mental skill that involves using all your senses to visualize experiences you haven't had yet or recreate events from memory. Often it can be visualizing yourself performing a task like basic rifle marksmanship (BRM) training, running a 5K, or asking someone out on a date. Imagery can also be envisioning how your target mindset might play out in your life. For example, if you're lovable or believe stress helps you, what would that look like throughout your life? Imagery can be effective because your brain is hardwired to see in pictures, and it can help boost your ability to see opportunities to live out your target mindset.

Brainstorm examples of imagery that you might want to develop as part of your mindset portfolio.

HPRC's imagery script worksheet shows how you can use imagery to support a performance-based belief.



Current or future experiences

Each day provides an opportunity to collect more evidence to support your target mindset. Be on the lookout for proof that will support your target mindset and make sure to capture all items and add them to your portfolio. Start by priming yourself each morning to notice evidence by developing a self-reflection practice, capturing pictures or making notes as you spot evidence throughout the day, and/or by journaling about supportive evidence at the end of the day.

Finally, try to put yourself in situations where you'll likely find evidence to support your target mindset. This can be especially hard if you're trying to challenge a current counterproductive mindset. It will take a conscious effort, so try to reach out to someone who can help support you as well.

List any daily strategies you can do to help collect evidence for your target mindset. Also, write down any opportunities you might want to try to challenge any related counterproductive beliefs.

Examples of daily reflection and journaling strategies are HPRC's stress-mindset daily reflection and HPRC's gratitude calendar.



Use stress as a tool to boost your performance, mental health, resilience and relationships.



Use the Gratitude Calendar to boost your mental health and optimize performance.

To learn more about the power of mindsets, the confirmation bias, and how mindsets can impact your performance, read the following HPRC articles.



What is a mindset?
How does it impact performance?



How performance-based beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies.