



MENTAL FITNESS

Create Your Performance Imagery Script

Imagery is a performance psychology skill that involves mentally creating an experience, typically from memory, which imitates a real experience. Good mental imagery incorporates all your senses, and building an imagery script can help boost your confidence while reducing stress and anxiety about an important upcoming performance.

You can generate imagery in your mind for just about any task (for example, taking an exam, performing weapon maintenance in the dark, or having a difficult conversation). Imagery also can help you learn new skills, maintain and improve your current abilities, and take advantage of times when physical practice isn't possible.

To optimize your performance, follow the instructions below to create your own imagery script.

IDENTIFY

Pinpoint what you want to improve through imagery, and specify how you hope it will be helpful.

What task or performance do I want to improve?

Example: Marksmanship, giving a brief, or push-ups...

How will practicing imagery help me?

Example: Learn or improve skills or strategies, increase confidence, or control arousal and anxiety...

INSPIRE

How does this task fit in with your larger goals and what you value? Staying connected to your purpose can help motivate you.

Why does this performance matter to me?

IMAGINE

Recall a time when you performed well during a similar task or event in the past. Make the scene more vivid and concrete in your mind by seeing yourself responding well to adversity. What did you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste at that time? Provide as many details as possible.

What were my environmental conditions?

Example: Weather, location, or things around me...

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What thoughts did I have (before, during, or after event)?

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Which emotions did I feel (before, during, or after event)?

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How did my body feel (before, during, or after event)?

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What are some possible obstacles or challenges that might get in my way?

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PLAN

Make a plan for where, when, and how often you'll practice your imagery script.

Where will I practice?

When will I practice?

Example: Before, during, or after training, on a mission...

How often will I practice?

IMAGERY SCRIPT SAMPLE

You're at the range about to engage in basic rifle marksmanship (BRM) training. Settling in the prone position, you're about to fire your M16 in single-shot bursts. You feel your weapon in your hands and anchor your body properly against the ground. Looking ahead, you see the target in your rifle sights at 50 meters. You hear your peers on the firing line. In about 60 seconds, your event will start.

You notice how you think and feel in this moment. You feel nervous in your ability to execute your best performance today. And you experience the familiar tension in your muscles and increased heart rate as the time to perform draws closer. At first, you think about missing the target and not qualifying, but you remember how to refocus: "Breathe, Relax, Aim, Squeeze." These thoughts and feelings tell you that you're ready to start.

In the past, you experienced these thoughts and feelings and performed well. Today's performance matters, and you're feeling confident in your ability to do well. Your breathing and attention are calm and controlled. Nothing can affect you today. Your platoon sergeant gives the command, "Fire when ready."

You take a slow, centered breath. Prior to your trigger squeeze, you sight your target, deeply inhale, position your finger over the trigger, and exhale fully... 3, 2, 1. You squeeze the trigger and see the bullet strike the target exactly where you aimed. Firing your weapon feels effortless.

You continue firing rounds with the same level of focus and calm, taking each shot one at a time as you execute your technique effectively.

You finish your event and acknowledge your good performance. You also reflect on the nerves you felt at the start of the event. Your muscle tension and increased heart rate before starting helped you perform your best today. You're confident in your ability to refocus in the moment and recognize that these nerves are important in helping you perform successfully. And you understand that this routine is going to lead to good performances in the future.