



## **Mental Skills**

### **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

Guided practice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7QoBABZu8k&t=88s>

- Beneficial times to use:
  - Recovery:
    - Night before competition for recovery
    - Evening after hard training
  - Difficulties falling asleep
  - Abbreviated versions can be helpful pre-competition for relaxation and/or managing nerves to ground to the present moment
    - Example: Only tense one body part (e.g., fists, shoulders)

### **Diaphragmatic Breathing**

- Focused Breathing (8 minutes):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ep5mKuRmAA&t=88s>
- Box Breathing (3 minutes):
  - Learning the skill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7uQXDkxEtM>
  - Visual practice: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF\\_1ZiFta-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF_1ZiFta-E)
- 4-7-8 Breathing (10 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiUnFJ8P4gM&t=62s>
- Extended Exhale Breathing
  - Learning the skill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY7QJaHOnYA>
- Five Finger Technique: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz7WZ5jS19I>
- Double Inhale Technique: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nx7IZr6katQ>  
*\*Can be especially helpful if the athlete is highly activated*

### **Grounding Techniques**

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114>

- Beneficial times to use:
  - First day at the competition gym. This helps them acclimate while teaching their body to regulate in this new space.
  - Abbreviated versions can be helpful in practice and pre-competition for relaxation and/or managing nerves to ground to the present moment
    - Only focus on sense. Sight and feel tend to be the easiest to engage with.
      - Sight: *Describe one thing you see in your immediate environment as if you've never seen it before. Look at textures, shape, size, colors, patterns. If your mind gets distracted, gently redirect it to your task of describing that object.*
        - You can do this with any object and for any amount of time.

- *Feel: Open your hand, palm up. With the pointer finger of your other hand, feel your open hand. Your only task for the next 30 seconds is to notice how your hand feels. Notice the lines and ridges feel, sensation of different parts of your palm, trace your fingers. If your mind gets distracted, gently redirect it to your task of describing that object.*
  - You can do this with any object and for any amount of time.

### **Managing Unhelpful Thoughts**

Leaves on a Stream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yQX1y7zMAg>

### **Visualization**

Happy Place Visualization: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GL2yEA5Q6N8>

- Beneficial times to use:
  - Frustrated in training
  - Before bed to help with relaxation
  - If nervous before competition