



**NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR TENNIS
MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAM 2009**

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National Wheelchair Tennis Mental Training Program

Losing is not my enemy... fear of losing is my enemy.
Rafael Nadal

Tennis is a both a physically and mentally demanding game. The key to improving your mental game is to make mental training an integrated part of your program. The following program outlines mental training activities that you can incorporate both into practice and as part of your daily routine to help you develop and establish a base for your mental skills for performance over the season

Setting the Stage

The goals of mental skills training are:

1. To prepare you to consistently perform at your optimal level for that day and for that context.
2. To assist you in refining your mental strategies and in overcoming obstacles that may be preventing you from reaching your optimal level.
3. To help you deal with the pressures and unexpected events that may arise prior to and during performance.
4. To encourage reflection and awareness regarding performance and personal improvements
5. To improve the performance experience overall.

Every individual possesses the ability to be mentally strong and perform consistently, even under the most adverse conditions. Surgeons, astronauts and elite athletes are some examples of top level performers who maximize their ability through mental skills training. Basic mental skills programming follows several steps:

A. Developing Self Awareness: Assessing Your Mental Training Needs

Understanding your strengths and areas to work on is a vital first step in developing self awareness and directing your attention to your needs. Below are 2 sources from which you can determine your mental training strengths and areas to work on.

Best and Worst Performance Assessment

Critically examining best and worst performances provides an opportunity to identify the key feelings and thoughts that contribute to or detract from your performances. This form is included in the first week of your mental training program.

Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS)

This questionnaire provides an opportunity to assess the mental strategies you use in practice and competition. Moreover it provides you with an opportunity to compare your scores with Olympic and World Class athletes to see what strategies they use and to what extent. You can take the test and receive results for a small fee at the following website: <http://www.topsfirst.com/>

B. Developing Skills: Educating Yourself on Mental Skills and Strategies

The second step is to understand the basic mental skills and strategies that contribute to high level performances. The website “Mind Tools” provides a comprehensive summary of the basic mental training skills and strategies for optimal performance in sport. On the site there are also recommendations of resources so you can explore mental training in more depth. I encourage you to check out their information and resources as a supplement to the activities and program outlined: www.mindtools.com/page11.html

C. Simulating: Integrating Mental Strategies into Practice and Daily Routines

Effective mental skills training is about developing positive habits that are automatic and that can withstand any pressure setting. Creating positive habits starts with integrating these strategies into practice and daily life and monitoring and adapting the techniques as needed. In your training program, mental skill integration will occur at all phases of the program in order facilitate the development of effective habits for optimal performance. Here are some examples of basic mental skill integration in and outside of practice:

Things I can do outside of practice...

- I can assess my commitment to my sport and how much I am willing to give to achieve my goals
- I can decide my goals and set specific things I want to work on physically, mentally, sport specifically and in my lifestyle.
- I can train my relaxation response by finding a quiet place for 10-15 minutes, 3 or 4 times a week, and either focusing on my breathing or listening to a tape with a relaxation script on it.
- I can develop my imagery ability by imagining game situations, skills I am working on or some of my best performances a few times a week for 5-10 minutes.
- I can develop my focusing and concentration ability by trying various focusing exercises a few times a week for 5-10 minutes.
- I can develop my confidence by writing a list of affirmations and a list of personal accomplishments and reviewing them periodically when I start to doubt myself
- I can develop practice and competition strategies to help me get in my best focus
- I can develop my refocusing plan for practice and competition by identifying when I lose focus and laying out my process for regaining it.

Things I can do in practice...

- I can set a specific physical/technical goal every practice
- I can set a specific mental goal every practice
- I can use cue words to remind me to work on my goals
- I can use cue words or images to get me to push myself to the limit
- I can use cue words or images to help me achieve my best focus
- Before executing a specific skill/drill or play sequence, I can set a goal for what I want to achieve
- Before executing a specific skill/drill or play sequence, I can visualize myself doing what I want to do
- If the coach gives me feedback, I can imagine or feel what I am being asked to do before attempting it again
- When learning or refining a skill or play sequence, I can come up with good personal reminders (images, words or feelings) to guide my performance.

- ❑ I can take a deep breath and relax before performing a skill or play sequence
- ❑ During breaks, I can scan my body and if I notice any tension, I can take a deep breath and relax those muscles
- ❑ If I start to doubt myself or my ability, I can remember my best performances and the positive feelings associated with them.
- ❑ If I start to talk negatively to myself and it makes me lose focus, I can say "STOP" to myself and try and replace the words with positive statements.
- ❑ When there is a break, I can take a moment to clear my head and relax
- ❑ When there is a break in the action, I can review my goals and decide any adjustments
- ❑ If I lose focus, I can regain it through my refocusing plan
- ❑ After practice, I can review my goals and evaluate my progress and identify necessary adjustments that I have to make for next time.

D. Implementing Your Mental Strategies and Monitoring Progress: Executing Mental Readiness

The final step is to test your strategies in competitions and monitor your successes and areas to work on. Successful monitoring should lead to adaptations to your performance routines and processes. As well, areas to work on can be integrated into your practice and daily routines. Coaches can, and should be a vital part of your monitoring. They can provide additional observations, facilitate your reflections and offer perspectives outside your awareness. Diary or journal keeping is an effective way to monitor your progress, chart your day-to-day successes and optimize your learning. I have suggested a few tools and processes within the training program. I strongly suggest adapting these tools or creating your own to meet your individual needs.

Program Training Phases

Your mental training program is divided into the following phases:

General Preparation: March 16 – April 12
 Competition Phase 1: April 13- May 3
 Specific Preparation: May 3 – 30th
 Competition Phase 2: June - November



Mental Training Program: General Preparation

National Wheelchair Tennis Mental Training Program: General Preparation

The following section outlines the objectives and week-by-week breakdown of a mental training program designed for general preparation. Description of all activities follows the weekly program outline. I would suggest exploring resources such as mind tools website mentioned in introduction to supplement your skill exploration and development.

GP Mental Training Objectives:

1. Examine ideal performance state
2. Explore factors in preparation that contribute to optimal performance
3. Identify goals for enhancing performance and integrating goals into training/day
4. Outline routine templates for performance preparation and performance
5. Explore anchors for mindfulness and attention

Week 1 – March 16 - 22

[Breathing Focal Point Activity](#)

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

[Complete best and worst performance assessment](#)

- Complete best and worst performer assessment related to yourself as a tennis player
- Reflect on the factors that contribute to you being in your optimal state. Consider factors that take away from your optimal state

[Performance Profile and Goal Setting](#)

- Complete the performance profile sheet and determine 3 areas to work on
- Complete the [goal setting sheets](#) to set process goals that you can integrate into your training

Week 2 – March 23-29

[Breathing Focal Point Activity](#)

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

[General to Specific Routine Planning](#)

- Complete general to specific routine planning sheet.

[Specific goals for the week](#)

- Identify specific goals related to your training, work, and life for each week - consider nutrition, sleep, etc. as well.
- Schedule your week based on your goals
- Set specific goals for each area every day. Make the goals process and performance oriented and record them in a diary
- Evaluate your goals for the week – what went well, what didn't, adjustments
- Identify highlights for day
- Identify challenges during the week and rate how you handled them out of 5 (5 well; 1 poorly).

Week 3 – March 30 – Apr 4Pre-performance Routine

- Complete pre-performance sheet
- Consider your best and worst performances to identify specific strategies that work for you. This is simply an outline or template for what you feel works best that you can work with and adapt throughout the season.

Awareness of Thoughts Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

Practical Scanning (daily life)

- Do activity 5 times per week (1-2 minute exercise)
- Record ability to identify and release tension in body

Specific goals for the week

- Identify specific goals related to your training, work, and life for each week - consider nutrition, sleep, etc. as well.
- Schedule your week based on your goals
- Set specific goals for each area every day. Make the goals process and performance oriented and record them in a diary
- Evaluate your goals for the week – what went well, what didn't, adjustments
- Identify highlights for day
- Identify challenges during the week and rate how you handled them out of 5 (5 well; 1 poorly).

Week 4 – April 5 - 9Performance Plan

- Complete performance plan sheet

Awareness of Thoughts Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

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- Identify specific goals related to your training, work, and life for each week - consider nutrition, sleep, etc. as well.
- Schedule your week based on your goals
- Set specific goals for each area every day. Make the goals process and performance oriented and record them in a diary
- Evaluate your goals for the week – what went well, what didn't, adjustments
- Identify highlights for day
- Identify challenges during the week and rate how you handled them out of 5 (5 well; 1 poorly).

Description of Activities for Mental Training Program for GP

Exercise: Breathing Focal point activity

The following activity is to be completed each day (5 times a week minimum) over the next week for 8 minutes each time. The goal is to help you develop an anchor breathing point that can be integrated into your performance and communication goals.

Activity: Set a timer for 8 minutes. Get into a comfortable position in your chair. Gently allow your eyes to close. Take a long deep inhalation that sweeps up your current focus, thoughts, and concerns and hold it for a moment. Then gently and slowly “sigh” as you release your breath. One more time. Deep breath. Release any remaining tension. Start your timer.

- *Notice if you are controlling your breathing (thinking too much about breathing). If so, release control and just let yourself breathe. Relax*
- *Notice the place in your body where you are most aware of the sensation of breathing. It may be your chest, diaphragm, or nostrils. There is no “right” place*
- *Gently direct your attention to that place. We call it the “anchor point”.*
- *With your attention on the anchor point, observe the natural rise and fall of the breath. Try to view this not as “your breath” but as “the breath”.*
- *Allow...allow...allow. There’s no need to become involved or figure anything out, just allow this space to follow your breath and attend to your anchor point.*
- *Thinking? No problem. Simply notice this. Gently return to your anchor point, your breath*
- *Try to follow just one full in-and-out cycle of breath. If you can, then follow another. If you can’t, fine. Just start over.*
- *Frustration? Irritation? Just notice these sensations. And return to your anchor point.*
- *Continue this way. Simply observe the natural cycle of breath at your anchor point.*
- *Can you follow just one breath?*
- *Do this until your timer sounds.*

Exercise: Best and Worst Performance Assessment

Critically examining best and worst performances provides an opportunity to identify the key feelings and thoughts that contribute to or detract from your performances. The following form has you reflect on those experiences and determine your optimal state. Think of your all-time **BEST performance(s)**, and respond to the following questions, keeping that (those) event(s) in mind:

1. How did you feel before the event(s)?

Mentally/physically flat	0	1	2	3	4	5	Energized mentally and physically
Not worried or scared at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely worried or scared
2. What were you saying to yourself (or thinking) just before the start of the event(s)?
3. How were you focused during the event(s) (i.e. what were you aware of paying attention to while performing)?

Now think of your WORST performance(s), and respond to the following questions, keeping the event(s) in mind:

4. How did you feel before the event(s)?

Mentally/physically flat	0	1	2	3	4	5	Energized mentally and physically
Not worried or scared at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely worried or scared
5. What were you saying to yourself (or thinking) just before the start of the event(s)?
6. How were you focused during the event(s) (i.e. what were you aware of paying attention to while performing)?

7. What were the major differences between your thinking prior to your best and worst performances?

8. What were the major differences in your focus of attention during these performances?

9. How would you now prefer to feel just prior to practices and competitions?

Flat	0	1	2	3	4	5	Energized
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Not worried or scared at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely worried or scared
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10. How would you prefer to focus your attention during practices and competitions?

11. Is there anything you would like to change in your approach to competitive events? or practices?

12. Is there anything you would prefer to change about the way the coach(es) or teammates or others approach(es) you during training or competitions?

Exercise: Performance Profiling

Performance profiling allows you to identify the technical (e.g., chair skills, forehand, backhand), tactical (e.g., strategies related to game plan/opponent), and mental (e.g., concentration, optimal emotion, confidence) components necessary to be successful in wheelchair tennis. Identify what those components are below and then rate your current ability on each of these areas out of ten. You can discuss this with your coach or others.

Component	Definition	Rating of my current level: 1-10
e.g. Concentration	e.g., Ability to focus on game plan and refocus after making errors	e.g., 5/10

Exercise: Goal Setting

Based on the above list areas that need improvement in priority order:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The next step is to identify what can be done to help you improve the quality. Then you can set your goals accordingly. Make your goals **SMART**:

Specific – Decide specifically what you need to improve. E.g. Flexibility = hamstring flexibility

Measurable – Decide how you are going to measure improvement. Measures can be objective (e.g., a time, weight etc.) or subjective ratings (e.g., your perception of improvement out of 10). If you measure yourself subjectively be sure to use the same standard or scale each time.

Action-oriented – Decide what actions you are going to take each day to improve your goal.

Realistic – Decide if the goals is challenging enough for you but also something you can achieve in the time set out.

Time-based – Decide when you want to achieve the goal by. Make sure to break the goal down into realistic chunks as you progress toward it.

Example:

Quality to Work on: Focus and Refocusing 5/10
<p>Specifically, what do I need to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My ability to refocus after I make a few unforced errors
<p>How will I measure improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rating myself out of 10 on how quickly I was able to refocus and return to my game plan
<p>What actions can I take to improve my refocusing ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a clear game plan with focus cues for each performance <input type="checkbox"/> Identify specifically situations where I lose focus – recognize how I feel, think and behave and identify how I would like to react in those situations -visualize alternatives <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a refocusing plan – take a deep breath, turn to face back of court, think about where I want to put the ball on my next action based on my game plan (cue focus word). <input type="checkbox"/> Visualize situations where I typically lose focus and imagine myself being able to use my refocusing plan <input type="checkbox"/> Practice refocusing in practice by creating challenging situations in practice where I have to refocus

Use the boxes below to help you determine your goals for each quality. You might want to talk with your coach to help give you some ideas for actions you can take to help achieve what you want.

Quality to Work on:
Specifically, what do I need to improve:
How will I measure improvement:
What actions can I take to improve:

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Specifically, what do I need to improve:
How will I measure improvement:
What actions can I take to improve:

Exercise: Using and Evaluating Your Goals

Now you can work toward achieving your goals by incorporating your action plans as part of your focus for training and/or as part of your daily routine.

Here are some suggestions for using goals/action plans in practice.

- set physical/mental/technical/tactical goals for each practice/training session
- give yourself the best chance of achieving your goals
- before each drill/training run decide what you want to do and exactly how you want to do it
- after each drill/training session, identify what adjustments you need to make for next time
- use break times to review goals and make adjustments
- after practice review what worked and what didn't in trying to achieve your goals and what adjustments you need to make

Reviewing your progress after each practice will help you modify your actions and allow you to see your improvements. Here are a few questions that can help the process.

- Did I achieve my goals for today?
- Did I prepare myself to perform my best today?
- Did I execute my action plan?
- What parts of my performance went really well? Why?
- What parts of my performance can be improved? How?
- For my next time what can I do better to prepare myself to be my best, perform my best, or stretch my limits?

Recording your progress is also important. You should consider keeping a diary/journal or charting your progress.

Exercise: General to Specific Routine Planning

Each competition will have a different schedule and different challenges that need to be considered. Your routine should reflect the nuances of each competition along with the essential ingredients for your optimal performance. Consider the question below when preparing for each competition:

1. What **MUST** you ensure happens in order for you to feel best prepared?
2. What do you **WISH** to do that will enable you to feel best prepared?
3. What is your general physical warm-up (cardio/stretch/skill practice/simulation of segments of competition)?
4. What is your general psychological warm-up (comfort zone/own space/reminders/positive images/goals/relax/affirmations)?
5. What is your specific physical preparation (specific preplanned warm-up)?
6. What is your specific mental preparation (specific preplanned pre-event thoughts - review/relax/reminders/focus)?

Exercise: Pre-performance Routine

Consider specifically the things you do prior to competition that enhance your readiness. Be open to trying new strategies if you have noticed inconsistencies in your performance state. Developing a solid routine is about outlining an initial plan and then modifying and refining it as necessary.

Before leaving for the venue my routine involves...

Equipment check	
Visualizing	
Resting	
Eating	
Positive self-talk	
Energy check	
Emotion check	

When I first arrive at the venue I like to:

--

I like to warm up for ____ minutes.

My mental warm up to help usually entails:

Goal setting	
Imagery	
Relaxation	
Self-talk	
Focusing	
Re-focusing	
Emotional control	

My physical warm up for competition includes

My team warm up for competition includes:

Right before the competition starts I try and achieve my best focus by:

Exercise: Awareness of Thoughts

The following activity is to be completed each day (5 times a week minimum) over the next week for 8 minutes each time. The goal is to help you being able to recognize, label it, and let go of thoughts.

Activity: Set a timer for 8 minutes. Get into a comfortable position in your chair. Gently allow your eyes to close. Take a long deep inhalation that sweeps up your current focus, thoughts, and concerns and hold it for a moment. Then gently and slowly “sigh” as you release your breath. One more time. Deep breath. Release any remaining tension. Start your timer.

- *Relax and allow your mind to settle*
- *A thought arises. It is most likely about the past or the future*
- *Label the thought either “past” or “future”*
- *Allow the thought to go it’s own way and do it’s dance*
- *As the thought moves off, notice the space around it. Silent. Still. Here. Now*
- *Surrender into this silence*
- *Another thought arises. Don’t resist it. Again, label it “past” or “future”*
- *Is your mind wandering off into thoughts, body sensations, or emotions? No problem. Just notice them and allow them to float away, like clouds in boundless sky*
- *Allow thoughts, allow silence, allow everything*
- *Do this until your timer sounds.*

Exercise: Practical Scanning in Life

Scan the muscles of your body during the course of the day and make a note of tense muscles. Use your cue word for relaxation as you breathe and try and relax the muscles that are a little tense or tight. You might set your watch to go off at 2- hour intervals to remind you to do the body scan. You might also want to scan your muscles after a stressful or emotion provoking situation (e.g., an argument, being cut off while driving etc.). See if you can relax the muscles and release the tension in these stressful situations as well as regularly throughout the day

Exercise: Performance Plan

During Competition...

I stay focused by:

--

If I lose focus or get distracted I get myself back by:

--

If I start to doubt myself or get stuck thinking about something that has just happened, or about a bad shot I:

If I start thinking too much I:

When there is a break in the action I (e.g., review goals, mentally relax by):

--

After the break is over I will regain my best focus by:

--



Mental Training Program: Competition Phase 1

National Wheelchair Tennis Mental Training Program: Competition Phase 1

The following document outlines the objectives of the mental training program designed for competition phase 1 of your training. Description of all activities follows the weekly program outline.

Competition Phase 1 Mental Training Objectives:

1. Apply routine templates from GP phase to match play
2. Evaluate mental strategies and routines in relation to match play and continue to identify factors that contribute to optimal performance and attention
3. Continue to establish anchors for awareness of attention

Week 1 – 4: April 10 – May 3

Post Performance Evaluation

- Complete the post performance evaluation form as soon as possible after every match

Post session relaxation and review.

- At the end of every match take 3-5 minutes to do some relaxed breathing. Review key sections of match in your mind. Identify areas you want to adjust or work on.

Learning to Control Breathing

- Do 3-4 times per week for 10-15minutes
- Can do before going to bed or first thing when wake up in morning

Identify your strengths and areas for improvement

- At the end of the 4 week period summarize your learnings emerging from these competitions. Identify areas to improve on mentally, technically and tactically

Description of Mental Training Activities for Competition Phase 1

Exercise: Post Performance Evaluation

Complete this form as soon as possible or feasible after the completion of each match.

Name: _____ Match: _____

Date: _____ Result: _____

Location: _____

1. Did you have a performance goal for this game? If so, what was it?

2. To what extent did you achieve this goal

Did not achieve goal at all	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Achieved goal completely
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3. What was your on-site focus goal for this match (e.g., what was the focus you wanted to carry into this event, the one that you felt would likely be your best result)?

4. To what degree did you achieve this on-site focus goal?

Did not achieve goal at all	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Achieved goal completely
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5. Circle your feelings going into this match.

No determination	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Completely determined to achieve goal
No physical activation (flat)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Highly physically activated (charged)
No worries or fears	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Extremely worried scared or afraid
No confidence	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Completely confident

6. How did your precompetition plan go?

Terrible	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Felt really good
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Were you feeling the way you wanted to feel?

7. What were your thoughts as you approached the start of the match?

8. How did your competition plan focus go?

Went poorly 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Went really well

Comments (e.g., What was on, what was off, what needs work or adjustments?)

9. When you were going your best, where was your focus?

10. Were you able to fully extend yourself to the limit during the match (how much did you push)?

Did not extend myself at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely extended myself

11. Did you have occasion to draw upon a refocusing plan at any time for this match (before, during or after)?

Yes No

If yes, comment briefly (e.g., were you able to call upon the plan, did it work?).

12. Did you experience any communication or interpersonal problems surrounding this match?

Yes No

If so, comment briefly (i.e., What was the problem and were you able to deal with it adequately?).

13. What adjustments if any do you need to make based on these reflections?

Exercise: Post Session Relaxation and Review

Lie down if possible, breathe easily and slowly. Let yourself relax. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out slowly. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out slowly. For 3 breaths, as you breathe out say to yourself... Relax...Relax...Relax. Feel the relaxation spread through your body. Listen closely to the sound of your own breathing. As you breathe in listen to the sound of the air going into your body. As you breathe out listen to the sound of the air leaving your body. Now focus on the feeling of your own breathing. As you breathe in, feel the air going into your body. As you breathe out, feel the air leave your body. Once you are relaxed. Review key sections of training in your mind. Consider the goals you set and whether or not you achieved them. Go over your successful moments and identify areas you want to adjust or work on.

Exercise: Learning to Control Breathing

1. Find a quiet place where you can sit or lie down for about 10-15 minutes every other day. Preferably lie down and make yourself comfortable.
2. When you are at ease and breathing normally, clear your mind and focus on only your breathing pattern (how often and how deeply you are breathing). Try and breathe only through your nose.
3. Two main thoughts should enter your mind now -- BREATHE IN...BREATHE OUT. Don't pay any attention to any other thoughts. Just let them pass by. Relax all the muscles as you breathe in deeply.
4. Think only about the first phase of the breathing process (i.e., inhalation). Take a deep breath, but don't exhale right away. Hold the breath and notice the tension that it causes in the rest of your body. Breathe out and repeat this at least two more times.
5. Concentrate now on the second phase of the process, namely exhalation. Tense the muscles and gradually or forcibly squeeze out all the air. As you breathe out experience in your body a sinking sensation. Make sure you exhale completely and while exhaling feel yourself getting heavier and heavier. Do not fight this feeling, just go with it.
6. As you progress, try to slow down your breathing rate. Make each breath last as long as you feel comfortable. As you breathe in, imagine a big pink balloon getting progressively larger. As you exhale, imagine that same large balloon, getting progressively smaller, while you begin to feel heavier and heavier.
7. Continue with this exercise until you feel completely relaxed.



Mental Training Program: Specific Preparation

National Wheelchair Tennis Mental Training Program: Specific Preparation

The following document outlines the objectives of the mental training program designed for specific preparation phase of your yearly training plan. Description of all activities follows the weekly program outline.

Specific Preparation Mental Training Objectives:

1. Integrate mental strategies and routines into physical and on court training
2. Investigate evaluation/journaling protocols
3. Explore imagery as a tool for performance review and preparation
4. Establish relaxation and energizing anchors

Week 1: May 4-10

Imagery Training and Process Cues

- Identify a few technical areas that you are working on
- Complete the feel/sensation process indicator sheet
- Use feel/sensation cues in practice
- Engage in imagery 3-5 times a week of for 5-10 minutes going over each error and correction. To enhance imagery can actually carry out skill (i.e. go through physical movement). You can do this before each practice or if just doing the imagery can do on way to practice facility
- Evaluate effectiveness of cues and ability to use them in with practice debriefing.

Integrating Mental Skills Before and During and After Training

- Choose physical training and on court sessions for getting yourself into your ideal state and approach each situation with a pre-performance plan
- Record on observations, challenges, successes
- Do a minimum of 3 times per week

Breathing Focal Point Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

Week 2: May 11-17

Imagery Training Self Awareness Training

- Do self awareness training exercise for 5 minutes
- Complete exercises 3-5 times a week
- For each exercise rate your imagery out of 10 for the following categories:
 - Clarity of image? (1 not clear; 10 very clear)
 - Sounds in image? (1 no sounds; 10 all relevant sounds)
 - Muscle/Body movement (1 no feeling; 10 full feelings)
 - Emotions (1 no emotions; 10 clear emotion feeling, i.e., relaxed)
 - Control (1 no control of image; 10 completely in control of image, i.e., I could make it do exactly what I wanted it to do.
 - Record any other relevant comments or challenges

Imagery Training and Process Cues

- Use feel/sensation cues in practice
- Engage in imagery 3-5 times a week of for 5-10 minutes going over each error and correction. To enhance imagery can actually carry out skill (i.e. go through physical movement). You can do this before each practice or if just doing the imagery can do on way to practice facility
- Evaluate effectiveness of cues and ability to use them in with practice debriefing.

Integrating Mental Skills Before and During and After Training

- Choose physical training and on court sessions for getting yourself into your ideal state and approach each situation with a pre-performance plan
- Record on observations, challenges, successes
- Do a minimum of 3 times per week

Breathing Focal Point Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

Week 3: May 18 - 24

Imagery Training Self Awareness Training

- Do self awareness training exercise for 5 minutes
- Complete exercises 3-5 times a week
- For each exercise rate your imagery out of 10 for the following categories:
 - Clarity of image? (1 not clear; 10 very clear)
 - Sounds in image? (1 no sounds; 10 all relevant sounds)
 - Muscle/Body movement (1 no feeling; 10 full feelings)
 - Emotions (1 no emotions; 10 clear emotion feeling, i.e., relaxed)
 - Control (1 no control of image; 10 completely in control of image, i.e., I could make it do exactly what I wanted it to do.
 - Record any other relevant comments or challenges

Imagery Training and Process Cues

- Use feel/sensation cues in practice
- Engage in imagery 3-5 times a week of for 5-10 minutes going over each error and correction. To enhance imagery can actually carry out skill (i.e. go through physical movement). You can do this before each practice or if just doing the imagery can do on way to practice facility
- Evaluate effectiveness of cues and ability to use them in with practice debriefing.

Integrating Mental Skills Before and During and After Training

- Choose physical training and on court sessions for getting yourself into your ideal state and approach each situation with a pre-performance plan
- Record on observations, challenges, successes
- Do a minimum of 3 times per week

Awareness of Thoughts Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

Week 4 – May 25-31

Imagery Training Self Awareness Training

- Do self awareness training exercise for 5 minutes
- Complete exercises 3-5 times a week
- For each exercise rate your imagery out of 10 for the following categories:
 - Clarity of image? (1 not clear; 10 very clear)
 - Sounds in image? (1 no sounds; 10 all relevant sounds)
 - Muscle/Body movement (1 no feeling; 10 full feelings)
 - Emotions (1 no emotions; 10 clear emotion feeling, i.e., relaxed)
 - Control (1 no control of image; 10 completely in control of image, i.e., I could make it do exactly what I wanted it to do.
 - Record any other relevant comments or challenges

Imagery Training and Process Cues

- Use feel/sensation cues in practice
- Engage in imagery 3-5 times a week or for 5-10 minutes going over each error and correction. To enhance imagery can actually carry out skill (i.e. go through physical movement). You can do this before each practice or if just doing the imagery can do on way to practice facility
- Evaluate effectiveness of cues and ability to use them in with practice debriefing.

Integrating Mental Skills Before and During and After Training

- Choose physical training and on court sessions for getting yourself into your ideal state and approach each situation with a pre-performance plan
- Record on observations, challenges, successes
- Do a minimum of 3 times per week

Awareness of Thoughts Activity

- Do 5 times per week for 8 minutes
- After completing the exercise, record in your journal, your ability to maintain attention on the task out of 10 (1 poor; 10 excellent). If your mind wanders during the task, make a note of any of the thoughts, emotions and elements that you were influencing your focus.

Description of Activities for SP Mental Training Program

Exercise: Feel Sensation Process Indicators

Identify current skills that you are working on, identify the common errors along with the corrections that need to be made. Finally link these corrections with a feel or sensation cue (e.g., smooth and fluid).

Skill	Common Errors	Corrections	Feel or Sensation Cue
e.g., Hitting ball	e.g., Turning head away	e.g., Head still Nice smooth long stroke	“SMOOTH” long stroke

Use these feel sensation cues in the following imagery script:

For 2-3 minutes and in a separate image, practice each skill from above over and over. See and feel yourself doing this from inside your body. Try and include as many senses as possible (see, feel, hear, mood). Use your feel/sensation cue each time you carry out the skill. You can physically do the action at the same time you are visualizing if you prefer. If you make your common mistake or perform the skill incorrectly, stop the image and repeat it, attempting to perform the skill correctly using your cue as a correction anchor to the proper technique. Repeat often.

Exercise: Integrating Mental Skills Before and During Physical and On-Court Training

For your physical workouts and any training sessions, integrate the following protocols:

1. Set goal prior to training and record it in your journal. During your session set a specific goal for yourself for your activity.
2. Before training or activity, take 3 minutes to visualize yourself in training, imagine getting ready, carrying out activity.

3. Follow a mini routine to get yourself ready for the training. Make note of your emotional state and focus levels when training begins. Did you get yourself ready? If not, what more do you need to do.
4. During training, focus on feel and sensation of movements. Identify key words associated with how you want to feel and use those words during training as you warm up and to get your focus back. Post activity, run through some of your positive skills and note the feel associated with them.
5. Be aware of challenges or distractions before and during training that cause you to lose focus (e.g., fatigue, other things). Have a clear plan for regaining focus (e.g., review goals, key word, deep breath, clear mind) and use your plan.
6. Before and during training, engage in practical body scans:
 - a. While warming-up, scan body during movements and make note of breathing patterns and heart rate. Identify optimal tension of those muscles and relax or energize them as necessary through breathing. Scan body and relax muscles not involved that may be too tense. Reduce and increase heart rate through breathing or self talk. Once the activity begins, scan your body periodically and immediately adjust tension, breathing or heart rate through breathing or self talk. With practice this skill will become automatic.

Exercise: Integrating Mental Skills into Post Physical Training or Activity

1. Post session relaxation and review.
 - b. At the end of every training session take 3-5 minutes to do some relaxed breathing. Lie down if possible, breathe easily and slowly. Let yourself relax. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out slowly. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out slowly. For 3 breaths, as you breathe out say to yourself... Relax...Relax...Relax. Feel the relaxation spread through your body. Listen closely to the sound of your own breathing. As you breathe in listen to the sound of the air going into your body. As you breathe out listen to the sound of the air leaving your body. Now focus on the feeling of your own breathing. As you breathe in, feel the air going into your body. As you breathe out, feel the air leave your body. Once you are relaxed. Review key sections of training in your mind. Consider the goals you set and whether or not you achieved them. Go over your successful moments and identify areas you want to adjust or work on.
2. Later in a journal:
 - c. Review your goals for training, make notes about things that went well and what adjustments you need to make.
 - d. Review your pre training routine. Did it get you ready? Review your ability maintain your focus. Did you have a goal for your activity or activities? Were you able to stay focused on your task? What key words were effective or helpful? Review your refocusing plan. Did you have to use it? Did it work?
 - e. Did you maintain/regain ideal levels of focus, emotion and confidence throughout the training? What adjustments, if any can be made?

Exercise: Breathing Focal point activity

The following activity is to be completed each day (5 times a week minimum) over the next week for 8 minutes each time. The goal is to help you develop an anchor breathing point that can be integrated into your performance and communication goals.

Activity: Set a timer for 8 minutes. Get into a comfortable position in your chair. Gently allow your eyes to close. Take a long deep inhalation that sweeps up your current focus, thoughts, and concerns and hold it for a moment. Then gently and slowly “sigh” as you release your breath. One more time. Deep breath. Release any remaining tension. Start your timer.

- *Notice if you are controlling your breathing (thinking too much about breathing). If so, release control and just let yourself breath. Relax*
- *Notice the place in your body where you are most aware of the sensation of breathing. It may be your chest, diaphragm, or nostrils. There is no “right” place*
- *Gently direct your attention to that place. We call it the “anchor point”.*
- *With your attention on the anchor point, observe the natural rise and fall of the breath. Try to view this not as “your breath” but as “the breath”.*
- *Allow...allow...allow. There’s no need to become involved or figure anything out, just allow this space to follow your breath and attend to your anchor point.*
- *Thinking? No problem. Simply notice this. Gently return to your anchor point, your breath*
- *Try to follow just one full in-and-out cycle of breath. If you can, then follow another. If you can’t, fine. Just start over.*
- *Frustration? Irritation? Just notice these sensations. And return to your anchor point.*
- *Continue this way. Simply observe the natural cycle of breath at your anchor point.*
- *Can you follow just one breath?*
- *Do this until your timer sounds.*

Exercise: Imagery Self Awareness Best Performance

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths and think back and choose a past performance in which you performed very well. Using all your senses, recreate that situation in your mind. See yourself as you were succeeding, hear the sounds involved, feel your body as you performed the movements, and re-experience the positive emotions. Try to pick out the characteristics that made you perform so well (e.g. intense concentration, feelings of confidence, optimal arousal). After identifying these characteristics, try to determine why they were present in this situation. Think about the things you did in preparation for this particular event. What are some things that may have caused this great performance?

Now imagine an upcoming performance and see yourself performing exactly as you know you can. Using all your senses, create that situation in your mind. See yourself as you are successfully executing a variety of techniques and following your game plan. Hear the sounds involved, feel your body as you perform the movements, and experience the positive emotions. Identify the state you are in when you perform your best (e.g. intense concentration, feelings of confidence, optimal arousal). Think about the things you will do to play your best at this event.

Exercise: Awareness of Thoughts

The following activity is to be completed each day (5 times a week minimum) over the next week for 8 minutes each time. The goal is to help you being able to recognize, label it, and let go of thoughts.

Activity: Set a timer for 8 minutes. Get into a comfortable position in your chair. Gently allow your eyes to close. Take a long deep inhalation that sweeps up your current focus, thoughts, and concerns and hold it for a moment. Then gently and slowly “sigh” as you release your breath. One more time. Deep breath. Release any remaining tension. Start your timer.

- *Relax and allow your mind to settle*
- *A thought arises. It is most likely about the past or the future*
- *Label the thought either “past” or “future”*
- *Allow the thought to go it’s own way and do it’s dance*
- *As the thought moves off, notice the space around it. Silent. Still. Here. Now*
- *Surrender into this silence*
- *Another thought arises. Don’t resist it. Again, label it “past” or “future”*
- *Is your mind wandering off into thoughts, body sensations, or emotions? No problem. Just notice them and allow them to float away, like clouds in boundless sky*
- *Allow thoughts, allow silence, allow everything*
- *Do this until your timer sounds.*



Mental Training Program: Competition Phase 2

National Wheelchair Tennis Mental Training Program: Competition Phase 2

The following document outlines the objectives of the mental training program designed for competition phase 2 of your training. Recommendations for this period are outlined below. Examples of monitoring tools follow the program suggestions.

Competition Phase 2 Mental Training Objectives:

1. Maintain routine consistency and debriefing and make refinement of plans as necessary
2. Establish regular monitoring and evaluation strategies
3. Identify challenges and distractions to performance both individual and contextual
4. Continue to establish anchors for optimal attention, arousal, and confidence
5. Maintain integration of mental strategies into practice session for quality practice
6. Explore enhanced imagery exercises for preparation, mastery and coping
7. Establish match plans based on opponents and integrate focus work (simulation)
8. Explore tapering, recovery and regeneration planning for between and during competitions

4 months – June 1 – Nov 22

Below is a series of suggestions based on the objectives above.

- Continue with mental skill integration into practice. Create more challenges and simulations in practice leading up to competition to prepare for less than ideal circumstances
- Continue with some form of relaxation that you can carry out throughout the season (e.g., focal breathing, breathing to relax, practical scanning). Minimum 3 times a week for 8-10 minutes.
- Continue with best performance imagery. Begin to gear best performance imagery to the upcoming competition for that week (i.e., specific situations and specific opponents). Minimum 3 times a week for 10 minutes.
- Create simulation opportunities in practice and exhibition games related to specific opponents styles of play
- Determine performance objectives for each match and opponent. Monitor using the performance objective evaluation sheet below or adapt for regular monitoring
- Begin to explore and identify and outline specific mental recovery and regeneration schedules and tapering plan based on schedule
- Consider imagery related to challenging situations and see yourself refocusing and using your breathing or other skills to successfully negotiate the situation. Minimum 3 times a week for 5 minutes. Supplement with similar challenge in practice.
- After each competition/tournament, conduct a comprehensive debriefing session. Identify what went well and areas to work on. Evaluate your preparation for specific opponents and styles of play along with how you managed the specific environment (e.g., heat, limited practice courts, travel). Identify specific lessons learned from that competition and areas you need to work on in practice to improve for the next competition.

I would suggest outlining a specific schedule with mental training activities scheduled and integrated based on previous exercises and above recommendations. The key is to establish regular monitoring opportunities in both practice and competitions settings to draw out lessons learned and to reestablish goals for the coming training and next competition.

Examples of Monitoring Tools

Performance Objectives and Evaluation

What am I working on right now to improve my game?				
What did I eat today?				
How do I feel right now, physically?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
How do I feel right now, mentally?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
How did I sleep last night?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor

Performance Objectives for Today:

1.	Key word or Phrase

<p>2. REVIEW: How well did I execute this objective on a scale of 1 (Did not execute) to 5 (executed well). ____</p> <p>Why?</p>

2.	Key word or Phrase

<p>1. REVIEW: How well did I execute this objective on a scale of 1 (Did not execute) to 5 (executed well). ____</p> <p>Why?</p>

Mental "Script"
Create Cue Words or phrases to trigger the proper mental state or performance.
Feeling: Create a feeling for what you want to do: " <i>Dance</i> ", " <i>Explode</i> ", " <i>Bounce</i> ", " <i>Breathe</i> ", " <i>Soft</i> ", " <i>Calm</i> ", etc.
Tactical/Technical: Support something that may break down: " <i>Lift</i> ", " <i>Angle</i> ", " <i>Step</i> ", " <i>Dip</i> ", etc.
Attitude: Tell yourself you're doing well & inspire confidence: " <i>Yes!</i> ", " <i>Come-on!</i> ", " <i>Believe</i> ", " <i>Trust</i> ", " <i>Do it</i> ", etc.
When Serving:
When Returning:
Net:
Baseline:

How would I rate the quality of my warm up/preparation today? <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Poor						
How would I rate my performance today?				Observations/Reflections		
	poor		excellent			
Technically:	1	2	3		4	5
Physically:	1	2	3		4	5
Mentally:	1	2	3	4	5	

<p>REFOCUS PLAN: Did I lose focus at any point during my performance? If yes, describe briefly what happened and how you tried to get it back?</p>

<p>LEARNING: (What can I take from this performance to improve?)</p>

ATHLETE JOURNAL

Short term goal:

Major events of my day:

What did I eat today?

How did I sleep last night?

- Excellent Good Average Poor

How relaxed does my body feel? (1 Very relaxed; 2 Medium; 3 Very tense)

- 1** 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 **10**

Daily goal:

Plan for achieving this goal:

EVALUATION

- Did I achieve my goal? (Be specific)

- How did I feel during practice?

- What was I saying to myself during practice?

- ♦ Did I lose focus at any point during practice? If yes, describe briefly what happened.

- ♦ How would I rate my performance today?(**1** Weak, **5** Medium, **10** Very Strong)

Technically:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physically:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mentally:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- Did I incorporate any mental training into practice? If yes, what, and did it work? If not, where could I incorporate it?

- ♦ What could I improve/change/do to enhance my performance?

Dissatisfied ②- Somewhat Satisfied ③-Satisfied ④-Very Satisfied ⑤-Excellent

S M T W T H F S Date:				S M T W T H F S Date:			
Evaluation				Evaluation			
Daily Action Plan:				Daily Action Plan:			
Comments:				Comments:			
Mental 1-2-3-4-5				Mental 1-2-3-4-5			
Sport 1-2-3-4-5				Sport 1-2-3-4-5			
Physical 1-2-3-4-5				Physical 1-2-3-4-5			
Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5				Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5			
Resting HR _____				Resting HR _____			
Hrs. sleep _____				Hrs. sleep _____			
Water (cups) _____				Water (cups) _____			
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
S M T W Th F S Date:				S M T W Th F S Date:			
Evaluation				Evaluation			
Daily Action Plan:				Daily Action Plan:			
Comments:				Comments:			
Mental 1-2-3-4-5				Mental 1-2-3-4-5			
Sport 1-2-3-4-5				Sport 1-2-3-4-5			
Physical 1-2-3-4-5				Physical 1-2-3-4-5			
Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5				Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5			
Resting HR _____				Resting HR _____			
Hrs. sleep _____				Hrs. sleep _____			
Water (cups) _____				Water (cups) _____			
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

①-Dissatisfied ②- Somewhat Satisfied ③-Satisfied ④-Very Satisfied ⑤-Excellent

S M T W T H F S Date:				S M T W T H F S Date:			
Evaluation				Evaluation			
Daily Action Plan:				Daily Action Plan:			
Comments:				Comments:			
Mental 1-2-3-4-5 Sport 1-2-3-4-5 Physical 1-2-3-4-5 Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5 Resting HR _____ Hrs. sleep _____ Water (cups) _____				Mental 1-2-3-4-5 Sport 1-2-3-4-5 Physical 1-2-3-4-5 Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5 Resting HR _____ Hrs. sleep _____ Water (cups) _____			
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
S M T W Th F S Date:				Week in Review			
Daily Action Plan:				Highlight for week:			
Comments:				Adjustments for next week:			
Mental 1-2-3-4-5 S.Specific 1-2-3-4-5 Phys 1-2-3-4-5 Lifestyle 1-2-3-4-5 Resting hr _____ Hrs. sleep _____ Water (cups) _____							
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks				

General Daily Monitoring Form

Name:




Date:

Circle Training Phase: Off-season training, In-season training, Competition

Training Intensity/Volume: High Med Low

Resting HR:

Check box that best represents how you have been feeling about each area

Performance Factors			
Fatigue: How has my energy level been?			
Muscle soreness: How have my muscles/body been feeling?			
Stress: How has my stress level been?			
Nutrition: Have I been eating properly?			
Sleep: How have my sleeping habits been?			
Training Enjoyment: How has my motivation for training been?			
Confidence: How is my belief in my abilities?			
Training engagement: How has my focus been during training?			
Training performance: How did I feel about my performance?			
Irritability: How was my emotional state today?			
Health: How good is my health (free from injury/illness?)			
Other:			
Other:			

COMMENTS: Provide any additional comments regarding training or personal state/circumstance below: