

# **HIGH PERFORMANCE MINDSETS FOR ATHLETES**



**LEARN THREE WAYS TO BUILD MENTAL  
TOUGHNESS ON YOUR OWN**

## Mental Performance Techniques Give you an Edge

The brain is an untapped muscle in most athletes. Training the brain creates consistent performances on demand. Weekly mental training using the techniques below **improves performance on demand, which makes better results more likely.** The more you work on the techniques, the more potent and powerful it becomes in times of pressure and adversity.

## The Pros use Mental Performance Techniques

World class athletes use mental techniques to help them prepare for training and competition. In a study of Olympians, it was found that **98% of athletes used mental techniques at some point in their preparation.** Elite teams such as the [Navy Seals](#), [All MLB Teams](#), [AC Milan MindRoom](#), [Seattle Seahawks](#), [eSports Teams](#), [New York Knicks](#), and the [Canadian National Hockey Team](#) hire experts to train their staff and people. Many well known [elite athletes](#) like [Lebron James](#), [Novak Djokovic](#) and [Serena Williams](#) use mental performance techniques to get a competitive advantage and perform on demand under pressure.

- *"Mental training has helped me overcome fear, anger, worry and self-doubt. I can now focus fully on the present moment, notice negative thoughts and emotions and allow them to pass."* — **NOVAK DJOKOVIC (WORLD #1 TENNIS PLAYER)**
- *"I meditate every day and I usually do it for 10-15 minutes in the morning, as that prepares me to face whatever comes next."* — **KOBE BRYANT (5-TIME NBA CHAMPION)**
- *"I won most of my matches, probably all of my grand slams, because of upstairs, my mind, not anything else."* — **SERENA WILLIAMS (23-TIME GRAND SLAM WINNER)**

## Keys to Success

- Strengthening your mental performance skills takes time. **Noticeable change and results may take time, so be patient.**
- It takes 10 minutes of quality mental training per day to change your brain and improve performance in moments that matter most.
- Train your brain before or after your sports training. Adding a new habit to an existing one makes it more likely to stick.
- If you're unsure which technique to start with, you could start with the technique you're most interested in, you've used before, you're strongest at, your coaches mention often, or that you've heard a pro athlete talk about using.

# BOX BREATHING

*A relaxation technique that helps you take control of your automatic breathing patterns to train your breath for optimal intensity levels and performance.*

## KEY POINTS

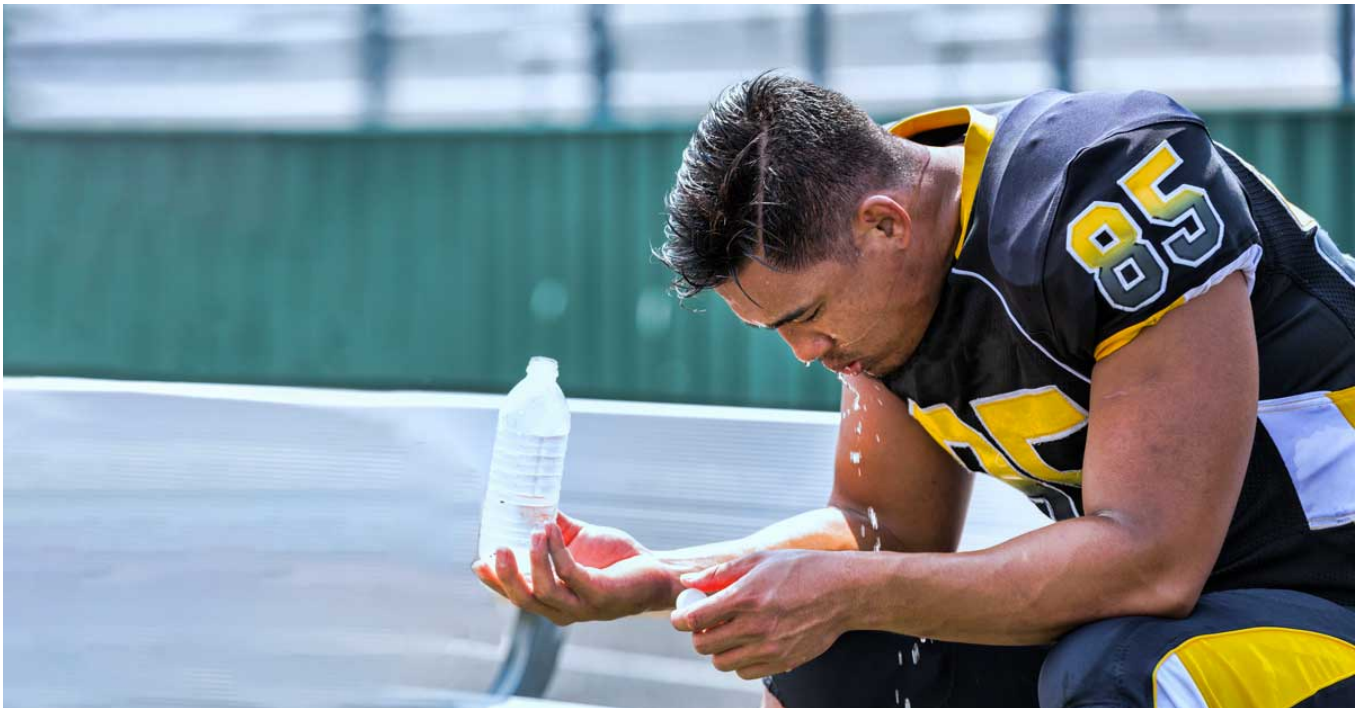
- Reduces anxiety/stress, creates optimal intensity levels and improves performance under pressure
- [Used by Navy Seals](#) to de-stress before life or death missions

*\*Pro tip: Inhale/exhale timing is important, so use a guided app like **"Awesome Breathing"** on [AppStore](#) or [PlayStore](#).*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Start by sitting with your spine as straight as possible.
2. Close your mouth and eyes. And exhale all of the air out of your lungs.
3. Next, inhale slowly through your nose, counting 1-2-3-4.
4. Now close the valve at the back of your throat and hold your breath for that same count. "When you do this, keep a slight lifting sensation as opposed to clamping down, causing pressure on your heart and lungs," Divine suggests.
5. Next, exhale slowly through your nose to that same count. Hold your breath again after the exhale.

Repetition builds strength - the more you use box breathing, the better your ability to calm down in tense and tight moments.



# REST & RECOVERY

*Using targeted, consistent and personalized recovery strategies during the day to maintain high energy levels.*

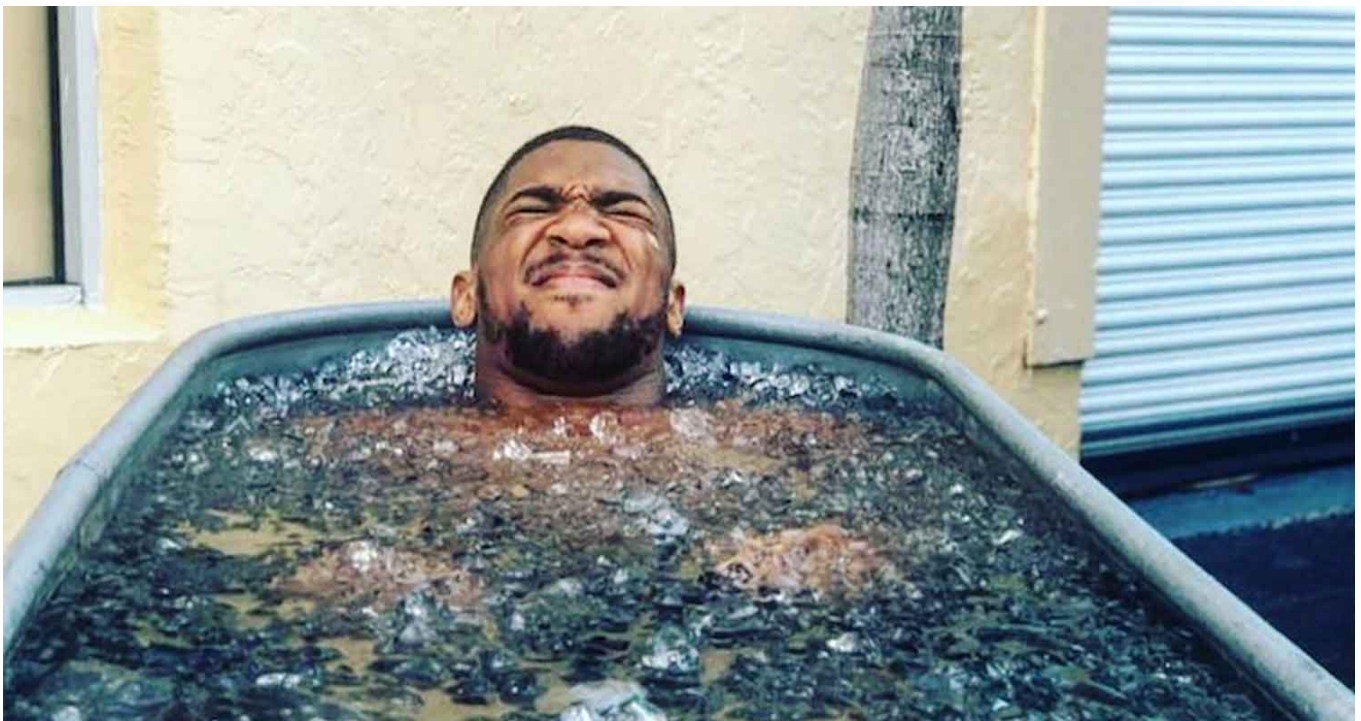
## KEY POINTS

- Every thought, feeling and action has an energy consequence.
- Energy is the currency of high performance.
- World class athletes manage their energy expenditure.
- **The other 22 hours'** is the time outside of training and competitions; How the athlete spends that time impacts energy expenditure and readiness to perform.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are a variety of **SENSE** strategies to try. I suggest putting screens and phones away while doing these activities.

- **Silence:** Spend time in quietude, observing thoughts
- **Enjoy yourself:** Do activities that fill your battery
  - Creative - acting, art, singing, play an instrument
  - Games - play a game you enjoy
  - Music - create a playlist you enjoy, and put it on as you relax
  - Solve a puzzle
  - Enjoy a coffee/tea
  - Put on an episode of your favorite show
- **Nutrition and Hydration:** Put high quality fuel in your body and it will perform better
- **Stress Less:** Use the breathing technique from page 2
- **Engage your Senses:** Engage 1 sense at a time
  - Nature - cold dips, hot sauna
  - Nature walk and observing





# INNER NARRATIVE

*Becoming aware of thought loops that no longer serve you,  
and choosing more useful inner narrative instead.*

## KEY POINTS

- We think 60,000 thoughts per day, and 70% are self-critical
- Critical thoughts create narratives that impact performance
- Becoming aware of the thought patterns and changing them  
heightens focus, builds confidence, improves mood and brings attention to relevant cues in the moment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflect on the following question: "What have been my best performances in the past 2 years?"

1. Write down 8-10 statements that describe what you're feeling, thinking or doing when you're playing at your best. Connect the statements to technical cues, movement, strategy. Click here to see athlete examples.
2. Start the statements with "I..." or "You...", keep them in the present tense, and action-oriented (what are you doing, not what are you avoiding). Remove words such as can't, don't, would, should, need to, could.
3. In week 1, pay attention to your inner narrative. Notice what thought patterns your brain visits often.
4. In week 2, rehearse the statements list at least 5 times per day and adjust as needed.



# CONTACT

My name is Zoran Stojković, and I train athletes on mental performance strategies (being calm under pressure, managing energy, setting clear goals, staying confident) so they perform on demand in major competitions and enjoy life while in the pursuit of greatness. For the past 5+ years, I've been supporting world class athletes as a Mental Performance Coach.

## National Team Athletes



## Pro Athletes

To get info on the programs I offer or to reach out, go to  
[www.kizo.ca/programs](http://www.kizo.ca/programs)

