

S P O R T S M I N D

Inside this Newsletter

1 The Mental Warm-up

Some strategies for an optimum warm up

2 Coaching Excellence 2004

Superb coach development conferences in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

3 Sportsmind Network News

The latest news and workshops from the *Sportsmind Institute*.

1 The Mental Warm-up :

Mental Strategies for an Optimum Warm-up

Fallacies about 'Warming Up'

Most serious sportspeople, coaches and sports trainers have heard, by now, about the potential problems with 'static stretching' before sports performances. Contrary to the consistent advice of many years, it has now been proven scientifically that extended static stretching prior to intense physical activity actually leads to a decrease in muscle performance, and even a greater potential for injuries.

Wiemann & Klee (2004), Jones (2004), and others have clearly demonstrated that static stretching can cause damage to myofibrils in muscles, and hence intense (stretching to maximum tolerable tension) muscle stretching before a sports performance leads to reduced performance and a higher risk of injury. It is now suggested that the best results are obtained by engaging in a general aerobic warm-up (e.g.. a five minute jog), followed by low intensity exercises similar in nature to those to be used in the actual performance.

Any stretching should be submaximal and dynamic - not intense and static.

Further, when speaking of the warm-up few people even consider the mental and emotional aspects of preparing oneself for competition -

attention is almost always focused just on the physical body.

So what is the best advice for the warm-up to get the best out of yourself? How can you warm up mentally and emotionally - as well as physically? What can you do now with the time that used to spent on stretching in the warm-up?

First, let's consider when the actual warm-up really begins.

Many people think of the warm-up as the ten minutes prior to a game commencing, or perhaps the thirty minutes prior to that. However I believe *games are won and lost on the day before, and the morning of competition*, as well as during the actual time of competing!

I suggest that you want to see the warm-up as starting the day before, and to initiate a series of actions that you repeat as a regular routine in order to get the best out of yourself on a consistent basis.

Having a planned, positive routine established which you follow consistently gives you a sense of familiarity and confidence, no matter where the venue is, or whatever the surface.

To establish the best routine for yourself, think back to the times you played your very best what did you do the day before? What did you eat? What did you think about? How did you direct your emotions? What did you have for breakfast on the morning of the match? How did you warm up? What were you thinking then?

Obviously, you will want to tailor a warm-up routine specifically to suit you, but here are a range of tips and ideas that may be helpful. Note that not all the suggestions may be suitable for everyone, and it is not suggested that you do all of these things - select those that work for

you, and establish them as a routine for consistent success.

The Day Before

* First thing in the morning, do a light aerobic and general muscle toning workout : for example a 15 - 20 minute cycle or jog, followed by easy abdominal and general upper body exercises with light weights, and gentle, submaximal stretching. Drink plenty of water - before and after. [I recommend starting every day with a glass of purified water before you do anything else!]

* Follow this with a soak in a bath, or spa, and a light massage (no deep tissue work). A thorough 20 - 30 minute self massage of your legs, abdomen, chest, arms, and especially your feet and hands - is cheap, and simple to do.

While you're massaging yourself (or being massaged), imagine your muscles strong and powerful and ready to perform tomorrow. Picture each muscle group being massaged, and imagine the blood vessels supplying it with oxygen and nutrients and taking away waste products. Visualise your neuromuscular system working as an efficient unit, quickly responding to the demands you will put it to, and easily coping with the work load. Say to yourself that you are fit and ready; think of your body as fit, strong, and flexible.

* Sometime during the day, (if you don't have to go to work), spend a couple of hours relaxing and reading / listening to / watching a motivational book / CD / video.

Eg, watch replays of great matches - particularly players who's style is similar to your own, and with whom you identify. As you do this, remind yourself of the strengths of your own game, and imagine yourself playing like your role model.

* In the afternoon or evening, spend 30 minutes drawing up a game plan for tomorrow. Focus on yourself and how you want to play, rather than the opposition. Replay and relive in your mind some of your very best performances - times in competition or training when you played your very best. Remember specific highlights, and feel strong and powerful, and deliberately visualise playing the same way, and doing similar shots tomorrow.

* Well before bed, take 20-30 mins to do a relaxation and visualisation exercise in which you imagine and feel yourself living out your game plan at the actual venue. Imagine both the physical aspects of positive stroke making and skill, and also how you want to feel in the match : confident, determined, courageous - and enjoying it!

I recommend this is done well prior to going to sleep, since you don't want to become obsessed with the game and think about it all night! Do it once, then forget about it. [There are many relaxation / visualisation exercises for enhancing sports performance. I have six excellent tapes/CDs on Motivation, Concentration, Positive Attitude, Goal Achievement, etc. [See www.sportsmind.com.au for details]

* Prepare your gear for tomorrow, then get a great night's sleep, by hitting the sack early. If you're a bit nervous, a short walk outside for 15 - 20 minutes before bed clears the head, and is far better than watching the idiot box (TV)!

The Day of the Match

* Rise early, have a drink of pure water, and do 10 - 15 mins of deep breathing and positive affirmations in fresh air - preferably in a park.

Affirmations are short positive phrases and statements used to build self belief and confidence, and to

commit to the process goals you want to attain. For example: *"I will get 70% or better of my first serves in court today"; "I'm fit and strong and ready"; "I can do it. I'm going to play to my best today."*; etc. [The *Sportsmind* book and training manual explain how to write affirmations, and have sample lists of positive affirmations to use. [See www.sportsmind.com.au for details]

Most people feel better doing this outside in the fresh air, but of course if you prefer you can do them in your room, or even as you're driving to the venue.

* After breakfast, while you're checking your gear, play some of your favourite, up-beat music to get you excited and ready (e.g. theme music from 'Rocky I or II', or from 'Chariots of Fire', etc. Think to yourself as you're listening that you're ready, you feel great, and you're really looking forward to the competition - you're going to play well, and enjoy yourself.

* Driving to the venue, again either say positive affirmations to yourself or listen to positive mood music.

* Thirty minutes before the match, go somewhere by yourself and spend five minutes quieting your mind of all self talk, and simply visualise (without words) playing well, staying focused and determined and positive.

As the match time approaches it's important to switch yourself from 'thinking' to 'playing' mode.

Positive self talk is essential in the match build up, but too much thinking is detrimental to playing from the 'zone' - where we simply 'play' unconsciously, without much conscious thought.

* Before walking on court/field, use a positive 'trigger' for accessing powerful feelings of confidence,

strength, self belief, joy etc. [The *Champion Thoughts, Champion Feelings* book explains in detail how to build positive triggers - see www.sportsmind.com.au for details.

From now on you want to be totally in feeling - quiet your internal dialogue, and get into the rhythm of your shot making; fully feel your balance, the temperature of the air, your breathing full and deep and regular, the feel of your hand gripping the racquet/club/etc.

Since the brain cannot process an external and an internal stimulus at the same time, by deliberately focusing on external feeling sensations such as described, you take away the opportunity for yourself to feel internal nervousness, doubt, or fear. Now you're truly warmed up and ready!

COACHING CONFERENCES

BRISBANE
AUGUST 25 - 26

MELBOURNE
OCTOBER 20 -21

SYDNEY
NOVEMBER 10 - 11

2 Coaching Excellence 2004

Come to *Coaching Excellence 2004!*

Considering the wonderful comments from last year, and the excellent range of speakers lined up this year, I urge you to make every effort to attend. I've enclosed a conference brochure and booking form, and I think you'll agree that given the topics and speakers scheduled, *Coaching Excellence 2004* will be even better than 2003!

Please also note the post conference workshops conducted by myself on ***Mindmatters for Coaches*** - do consider adding an extra day to your conference, and learn some of the techniques I taught to Jonny Wilkinson's kicking coach prior to the Rugby World Cup.

Bookings are coming in quickly for this unique coach development event, so book your place today - numbers are limited to just 80 delegates.

An 'early bird' discount price of **\$695.00** is available if full payment is received by 1st September [Normal conference registration is \$745.00] Full details are in the enclosed flyer.

3 Sportsmind Network News Sportsmind 'Recharge' Weekends

For the first time, I am offering a special three-day weekend workshop at the beautiful Couran Cove Eco-Resort on the Gold Coast.

The idea is to provide an opportunity for athletes to 'recharge' themselves with just three hours a day of Sportsmind motivation and mental toughness training, leaving the rest of the day to relax in the natural bush / beach, and or do some training in the gym / pool / track at the resort.

Numbers will be limited to just 6 people, to allow for a very personal training experience. Tuition is just \$295.00. Dates are Nov 26-28. Call now for more details.

Sports Hypnosis Workshop

Remember also the annual ***Sports Hypnosis*** workshop in Byron Bay in September/October. I believe this is the very BEST program that I offer, and whether you're a coach or an athlete there is so much benefit to gain from understanding how to access the resources of the unconscious mind.

SPORTS HYPNOSIS
Sept 26 - Oct 10 : Byron Bay

Melbourne Tutorials & Consults

I'll be visiting Melbourne every month, and am available for personal consulting for athletes and to run tutorials for athletes and coaches. Dates in Melbourne : **Aug 12 - 15; Sep 2-5; Oct 19-24; Nov 13-16; & Dec 9-12.** Call me personally on **07 5445 7994** for details of availability.

Exciting New Developments

This year, to provide even better and more effective services to *Sportsmind* clients, I've developed three, exciting new services : ***Sportsmind Personal Power 30 day Program*** and ***Sportsmind Mental Mastery 6 month and 12 month Programs.***

For the serious sportsperson, one or two mental gym workouts is not the enough. You don't get physically fit with an ad-hoc approach to training, and likewise, mental fitness comes from a consistent, personalised training program. *Sportsmind* is the FIRST to

provide such a sophisticated, personalised, mental toughness training program suited to YOU over the long term.

Imagine having your own mental coach to guide you through developing all the seven skills of the Sports MIND - one lesson a week for 6 - 12 months. How much more confident, relaxed, focused and successful you will be! Call me on **07 5445 7994** for more details.

Future Directions

Over the next ten years our goal is to make *Sportsmind* the leading performance coaching provider for sportspeople and coaches in the world - and to establish a network of *Sportsmind* accredited coaches who provide assistance for the best athletes in the world. The people involved will have a practising sports background, have an interest in coaching, and be superb facilitators able to create learning environments which are challenging, enjoyable and directed at personal development.

How to Become Part of the Vision

To be part of this vision, you will complete a *Sportsmind* training to attain your Level 2 accreditation, and a licence to practice. If you're interested in establishing a career in sports performance coaching, consider the opportunities *Sportsmind* provides.

How to Contact Sportsmind

For more details about *Sportsmind*, please call or write to :
77 FLAXTON MILL ROAD
FLAXTON QLD 4560
Ph [07] 5445 7994 [Fax 5445 7995]

We can be contacted by email on :

jeff@sportsmind.com.au

The website is:

<http://www.sportsmind.com.au>

Licensed Sportsmind Coaches

Sportsmind coaches can help you improve YOUR performance. Contact :

Brisbane & S.E. Qld

Jeffrey Hodges (07) 5445 7994

Kim Timothy 0419 553 739

Melbourne

Willie Hill 9553 6168 / 0418 391 500

Kevin Scott 0414 792 605

Murray Beveridge 0411 705 491

Rob Gronbeck 95230594/0431228179

Sydney

Jo Mansell 9412 2808 / 0416181654

Newcastle

Richard Thorpe 0416 074 024

Hobart

John Bermingham 03 6224 8738



How to Contact *Sportsmind*

If you'd like more details about *Sportsmind*, please call or write to the address below:

**77 FLAXTON MILL ROAD
FLAXTON QLD 4560
PH / FAX [07] 5445 7994**

We can be contacted by email on :

jhodges@sportsmind.com.au

The website is:

<http://www.sportsmind.com.au>



The Mental Edge