

Insights from 10-Minute Toughness by Jason Selk

"A considerable body of research validates that each of these five tools is highly effective for improving an individual's ability to perform... Give it a try. Complete the mental workout for two weeks, and judge for yourself if it helps you to improve focus, ability, and consistency." – Jason Selk



15-Second Centered Breath

When you feel performance pressure, your heart rate naturally increases. If you don't take steps to control your heart rate, you'll impair your ability to think clearly (shutdown executive functioning in the brain) and activate your fight-or-flight response.

"An effective way to control heart rate is to use a "centering breath" before and during competition. The centering breath is a fifteen-second breath in which you breathe in for six seconds, hold for two, and then breathe out for seven. In doing so, you will biologically control your heart rate so as to better control your arousal state and ability to think under pressure." – Jason Selk

Jason Selk has found that when elite athletes and top business executives slow their breathing to 15-second intervals before going on stage, they get enough air into the diaphragm to trigger a relaxation response and steady their heart rates.



Performance Statement

"After taking your centering breath, repeat to yourself the statement that most effectively focuses you on what it takes for you to be successful in competition. Repeating the performance statement in your mental workout will help remind you of the most helpful thought necessary for success." – Jason Selk

Without a performance statement, your mind will naturally fill up with thoughts of worry and self-doubt. Repeating a performance statement is an excellent tool to reduce negative self-talk during performances. A cyclist's performance statement is: "Weight back and breathe easy." A business executive's performance statement is: "Listen first; then decide; be swift and confident."

Discover your performance statement: **"Imagine that you are about to compete in the biggest game of your life, and the best coach you have ever had is standing right next to you. Sixty seconds before the competition begins, your coach looks you in the eye and tells you that if you stay focused on this one thing or these two things, you will be successful today. What one or two things would the coach name? (Be as specific as possible, and avoid using the word don't)" – Jason Selk**



Visualizations

After reciting your performance statement, spend one minute visualizing **past success** (seeing highlights from past performances), one minute visualizing **ultimate success** (seeing yourself performing well on the biggest stage you can imagine, ex: a stadium full of people), and one minute visualizing a **successful upcoming performance**.

Visualization Guidelines:

- Rapidly replay a scene in your mind until it feels right.
- Ensure your final visualization is at 'game speed' (how you expect to experience the upcoming performance in real time).
- End each successful visualization by congratulating yourself on an excellent performance.

Questions to ask yourself while visualizing (answer with as much detail as possible):

- What do I see? _____
- What do I hear? _____
- What do I feel? _____
- Emotionally, what does it feel like to be successful? _____



Identity Statement

"Upon completing your personal highlight reel, repeat to yourself your identity statement to help mold your self-image. The identity statement is a proven tool for boosting self-confidence, which is the single most helpful mental variable in improving performance." – Jason Selk

Complete the following statement:

"I am incredibly: (a key strength of yours – ex: passionate, thoughtful, creative, etc.); I am the: (what you want to be known for – ex: best speaker at this conference, most effective salesperson at this tradeshow, etc.).

Jason Selk's identity statement:

"I am more motivated than my competition; I am the most effective sports psychology consultant in the world."



15-Second Centered Breath

"The mental workout ends the way it begins, with a fifteen-second deep breath. This breath resets your heart rate to a level of controlled arousal and increased mental focus." – Jason Selk

"The 10-MT workout is designed to help athletes control arousal (through centering breaths), create a precise and effective focus (through the performance statement and personal highlight reel), and improve self-image (through the identity statement)." – Jason Selk