

# Coaching Excellence

Developing High Performance Athletes

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## THE NEW SCIENCE OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT

**Training The Brain:** High performance athletes win first in their mind and then they play the game

**Keystone Habits:** Habits that have the power to start a chain reaction and that over time change everything

**Perfect Practice:** Key design principles that ensure practice truly makes performance better

### TRAINING THE BRAIN: The Research & The Tools :

- Relaxation
- Visualization
- Affirmations
- Goal Setting
- Concentration
- Arousal Levels
- Confidence
- Routines
- Releases



### TRAINING THE BRAIN: 4 Cup Analogy

- Upside down – Mind is closed to new information
- Hole in bottom – Information goes in one ear and out the other
- Filled with dirt – Information gets lost in distractions
- Upside right – Mind is open and receptive



### TRAINING THE BRAIN: Traffic Light Analogy

#### Green –

- Relaxed, focused, confident & in control
- Positive & energized
- 80% chance of success
- Keep it going



#### Yellow -

- Beginning to slip, hoping, doubts & second-guessing,
- Scared & pressing
- 40% chance of success
- Slow down

#### Red–

- Blaming self and others, relying on luck, overanalyzing & overwhelmed
- Emotional & negative
- 5% chance of success
- Stop

## **TRAINING THE BRAIN:**

- ▼ Energy Lines
- ▼ What If Up or Down?
- ▼ Super Performer Inside

## **SPORT GROUPS: Share favorite ideas**

### **KEYSTONE HABITS: The Research & The Habit Loop**

- ▼ Routine
- ▼ Reward
- ▼ Cue



### **Keystone Habits: Pre-practice Habit**

- ▼ Self Evaluation
- ▼ Take out the trash
- ▼ What could get in my way of having a great practice today?
- ▼ Connection
- ▼ Why do I play the game: Purpose statement & 3 words
- ▼ With teammates
- ▼ Review hype # and practice plan
- ▼ Transition
- ▼ Time trigger: "It's GO time!"
- ▼ Transition to hype # during warm-up

### **PERFECT PRACTICE: Observe Top Performers**

- ▼ Fill your mind with vivid images of your ideal self
- ▼ Use pictures and videos
- ▼ Watch the skill being performed with great intensity over and over
- ▼ Build a high-definition mental blueprint
- ▼ Become aware of the movement and rhythm
- ▼ Feel the interior shape of the moves

### **PERFECT PRACTICE: Slow it down**

### **PERFECT PRACTICE: Journal**

- Keep some form of daily performance journal
- Write stuff down and reflect on it
- Results from today
- Ideas for tomorrow
- Goals for next week
- What is the same in my swing compared to the model?
- What is different in my swing compared to the model?



## **PERFECT PRACTICE: Identify Hard vs Soft Skills**

- **Hard skills:** high-precision skills that are performed as correctly and consistently as possible every time, have one path to an ideal result. **Always Being Consistent**
- **Soft skills:** high flexibility skills that have many paths to a good result, about being agile and interactive, recognizing patterns as they unfold and making smart choices. **Reading, Recognizing, and Reacting**

## **PERFECT PRACTICE: Practice in the Sweet Spot**

**Comfort Zone:** Ease, effortless

You are working, but not reaching or struggling.

Percentage of successful attempts: 80% and above

**Sweet Spot:** Frustration, difficulty, alertness to errors

Fully engaged in an intense struggle, stretching with all your might for a nearly unreachable goal

Percentage of successful attempts: 50-80%

**Survival Zone:** confusion, desperation, over-matched,

Scrambling, guessing

Percentage of successful attempts: Below 50%



## **PERFECT PRACTICE: Measure Reaches & Reps**

- ▼ Instead of counting minutes or hours, count reaches and reps
- ▼ Instead of planning to practice for 30 minutes, plan to make 30 quality swings
- ▼ Count only those reps that are done correctly
- ▼ Count only those reps that you used your mental routine
- ▼ Ignore the clock and get to the sweet spot

## **PERFECT PRACTICE: Master One Chunk at a Time**

- ▼ Chunks are to skills what letters of the alphabet are to language.
- ▼ First, engrave the blueprint of the skill on your mind.
- ▼ What is the smallest single element of this skill that I can master?
- ▼ What other chunks link to that chunk?
- ▼ Practice one chunk by itself until you've mastered it—then connect more chunks.

## **PERFECT PRACTICE: Play Small, Addictive Games**

- ▼ The term “drill” evokes a sense of drudgery and meaninglessness.
- ▼ It's mechanical, repetitive and boring.
- ▼ Games are the opposite.
- ▼ They mean fun, connectedness and passion.
- ▼ Skills improve faster when they are looked at this way.
- ▼ Transform the most mundane activities into games.
- ▼ If it can be counted it can be turned into a game.

### PERFECT PRACTICE: Use the 3 x 10 Technique

- ▼ Our brains make stronger connections when they are stimulated 3 times with a rest period of 10 minutes between each stimulation.
- ▼ To learn something most effectively, practice it 3 times, with a 10-minute break between each rep.



### PERFECT PRACTICE: What is the Best Method?

1. While teaching strategy select a single athlete to draw it out on the board. T or F
2. When repeating a skill perform it 20 times or 5 times in a row perfectly?
3. Practice a skill at the end of practice, with each player performing it alone 50 times or practice it intermittently during a scrimmage while tired?
4. While scrimmaging wait until the end to give feedback or periodically stop play and give feedback?



### PERFECT PRACTICE: Use the R.E.P.S. Gauge

- ▼ **R: Reaching and Repeating:** Does the activity have them operating on the edge of their ability? Use a “game show” format.
- ▼ **E: Engagement:** Is it immersive? Does it command attention? Repeat a skill 5 times in a row perfectly vs do it 20 times.
- ▼ **P: Purposefulness:** Does the task directly connect to the skill you want to build?
- ▼ **S: Strong, speedy feedback:** Does the learner receive a stream of accurate information about her performance—where she succeeded and where she made mistakes?



### Want to Learn More?

- *Mind Gym: An Athlete's Guide to Inner Excellence* by Gary Mack
- *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do In Life and Business* by Charles Duhigg
- *The Little Book of Talent: 52 Tips for Improving Your Skills* by Daniel Coyle
- *Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better* by Lemov, Woolway & Yezzi