



SUMMIT SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

Mental Training Habit Journal

Mental strength is not loud. It's quiet, daily,
and earned.

SUMMITSPORTPSYCHOLOGY.COM

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INTRODUCTION

Why Mental Training Matters



Mental performance is not just about grit — it's about training your brain and body to respond effectively under pressure. Research shows that athletes who practice mental skills like breathwork, visualization, and cognitive reframing have lower anxiety, better focus, and more consistent performances (Gross et al., 2018; Vealey & Chase, 2016). Your nervous system is central to this: when it's regulated, you can access your full cognitive and physical abilities. When it's overwhelmed, your body reacts as if it's in danger, even when it's just game time. Just like you train your body, this journal helps you train your nervous system and mindset, one day at a time. Take 5–10 minutes a day to:

- Regulate your nervous system
- Set intentions with clarity
- Reinforce what works through reflection

Whether you're chasing a championship or growing your leadership, this is your space to show up with purpose.

PURPOSE AND TIPS

How to Use This Journal

Purpose

Establishing a consistent, daily mental training routine is crucial for athletes aiming to enhance their performance and well-being. While physical training is often prioritized, integrating mental exercises—such as journaling—can provide a competitive edge. Regular journaling fosters self-awareness, aids in processing emotions, and clarifies goals, leading to improved focus and resilience. By embedding this practice into your daily schedule, much like physical workouts, you create a transformative system that supports both mental and physical excellence.



Key Tips

- Use it daily or on key training/competition days
- AM = Set your mind before the day begins
- PM = Reflect and reinforce at night
- One week per section; repeat as long as you like
- Extra tools are in the back (breathwork, visualization tips, etc.)

Daily Reflection

Start Your Day Like a Pro: AM Journaling Routine

One of the most powerful ways to build mental strength is by anchoring your mindset before the day begins. This morning journaling routine is designed to take just 5 minutes, yet it can radically shape your focus, confidence, and resilience over time. Following James Clear's *Atomic Habits* framework, this routine is most effective when it's consistent, easy, and tied to something you already do—like drinking coffee, brushing your teeth, or finishing breakfast. The goal is to make journaling your identity-based habit—not something you have to do, but something that reflects who you are: an athlete who trains their mind like their body. By starting small, showing up daily, and stacking this routine onto existing habits, you'll create a mental foundation that supports everything else you do.

First, start with one minute of a breathing technique (please see page 09 for a list of breathing techniques and their function).

Today, I will visualize myself... (e.g. staying calm when I miss a shot and recovering quickly by hustling back on defense, using the mantra "next play"):

A Challenge I may face today is.../ A way I can reframe it is... (e.g. comparison with teammates / competition helps us all get better):

One thing I am grateful for today is... (e.g. the change to play, my teammates who push me):

Daily Process Checklist

Helping you focus on what matters.

High performance starts long before the competition begins. It starts with how you show up—mentally, emotionally, and physically—each morning. The AM Process Checklist is a simple way to lock in your mindset and lay the foundation for excellence, no matter what the day holds.

This checklist is built around four core process goals adapted from Jim Miller's Inner Excellence framework that elite performers return to again and again:

1. Give Today's Best – Focus on effort, not perfection. Bring your full presence to whatever is in front of you.
2. Be Present – Let go of distractions, regrets, and future pressure. Lock into the moment.
3. Practice Gratitude – Gratitude shifts your mindset from fear and scarcity to confidence and possibility.
4. Focus on My Routines and What I Can Control – Your habits shape your outcomes. Control the controllables and trust the process.

When you begin your day with intention, you create consistency, reduce anxiety, and unlock your potential—on and off the field. This isn't about motivation; it's about preparation. And it starts right here.

Review and check daily:

- ☐ I'm committed to give the best of what I have today.
- ☐ I'm committed to being present, noticing when I'm not present, and re-grounding into the here-and-now when my mind has taken me into the past or future
- ☐ I will practice gratitude and challenge myself to find gratitude in hard moments.
- ☐ I will concern myself with executing my routines and what I can control. I will let go that which is not in my power. I recognize that I can control how I respond to my thoughts and feelings, what I focus on, and how I act.

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PM Reflection

Finish Strong, Learn Deep

If the morning is about setting your mindset, the evening is about learning from it. This 5-minute end-of-day reflection helps you slow down, reset, and reinforce the habits that make you a better athlete—and a better competitor. By taking a moment to review how you showed up, where you grew, and what you want to carry forward, you train your mind to notice progress, not just problems.

Rooted in the same principles from James Clear's *Atomic Habits*, this evening routine is most powerful when it's simple, consistent, and tied to something you already do—like turning off your phone, brushing your teeth, or getting into bed. The goal is to make reflection part of your identity: something you are, not just something you do. Athletes who review their day with curiosity—not judgment—build self-awareness, recover faster from mistakes, and show up more focused tomorrow. Small steps. Honest reflection. Consistent growth. Again, start with one minute of a breathing technique (please see page 09 for a list of breathing techniques and their function) to set the tone and your energy.

A moment I was proud of today... (e.g. I stayed composed after a bad call):

How I handled challenge or stayed composed.. (e.g. I took a breath and refocused, telling myself the mantra "next play" and then reinforced this.): _____

What I learned about myself today... (e.g. I can stay focused even when I'm upset): _____

One humble moment or team-first action I took... (e.g. I celebrated a teammate's success even though I was disappointed in my own performance.):

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Weekly Reflection

See the Patterns, Shape the Path

High performers don't just train hard—they reflect deeply. A weekly reflection gives you the chance to zoom out, notice patterns, and be intentional with your focus for the week ahead. While daily check-ins sharpen moment-to-moment awareness, this ritual helps you see the bigger picture: how your mindset, habits, and choices are adding up over time.

Taking just 10–15 minutes once a week to review your wins, challenges, and lessons learned builds clarity, confidence, and direction. This is where growth becomes intentional. Stack it onto a regular routine—like Sunday night planning or after your last workout of the week—and make it part of your identity as an athlete who thinks as intentionally as they train.

My top three wins of the week: _____

One lesson I learned related to my mental game: _____

One mindset skill to work on improving in the upcoming week: _____

Favorite mantra of the week: _____

Mental Skills Toolbox

Breathe, Emotional Regulation, and Mindset Strategies

Pressure doesn't build character—it reveals it. And in those moments, you won't suddenly become calm, confident, and focused. You'll become whatever you've trained to be. This toolbox is your training ground. Breath control, emotional regulation, mental reframes—these are the reps that sharpen your edge when everything's on the line. You want to compete like a pro? Start thinking like one. Use these tools daily, and when the moment comes, you won't have to hope you're ready—you'll know you are.

Breathe

Your breath is your remote control for your nervous system. Learning to breathe intentionally helps you shift from panic to presence, stress to focus.

1. Nasal Breathing

Breathe in and out through your nose as often as possible—especially during training and sleep. It improves oxygen efficiency, reduces anxiety, and builds endurance.

2. Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)

Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat for 1–2 minutes to calm your mind and refocus under pressure.

3. Coherent Breathing (5–6 breaths per minute)

Inhale for 5 seconds, exhale for 5 seconds. This slows your heart rate, balances your nervous system, and helps you reset during stress.

4. Alternate Nostril Breathing

Use your thumb and finger to close one nostril at a time while you breathe in and out. Balances left and right brain activity and helps center your focus.

Here are some possibly open-ended journal prompts:

- When today did I notice my breath shift? What was happening around me?
- Did I use any breath tools to reset? What helped me refocus?
- What's one breathing pattern I want to practice more consistently this week?

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Emotional Agility - Tools for Composure

Emotional composure isn't about staying calm all the time—it's about using emotion well. The best athletes don't avoid feelings like frustration, nerves, or excitement—they know how to feel them fully without getting hijacked by them. Instead of pushing emotion down, they learn to recognize it, ride it, and redirect it into focus, energy, or fuel. Composure means being able to stay steady when the moment gets big—not by shutting down emotion, but by staying connected to it without losing control. It's a skill, not a personality trait—and it's one of the clearest markers of elite mental performance.

1. Name It to Tame It

Put words to what you're feeling—"I'm feeling pressure," "I'm frustrated," "I'm excited." Labeling emotions reduces their intensity and helps you respond instead of react.

2. Identify, Feel, Reframe

Here, too, start by naming the emotion. Next, give yourself up to one minute to genuinely feel the feeling. Lastly, cope with the feeling by reframing your perspective on the emotion or event.

3. Grounding Through Senses

Look around and name: 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste. This pulls your brain out of spiraling thoughts and into the present.

4. Reset Routine

Create a simple, repeatable routine (breath + phrase + movement) to use after mistakes or before high-stress moments. Example: Deep breath → shake it out → say "Next play."

Here are some possibly open-ended journal prompts:

- What emotions showed up strongest in me today?
- How did I respond to those emotions—did I ride them, name them, or avoid them?
- What grounded me today when things got chaotic or intense?
- Did I use a reset routine or tool after a mistake? What did I say or do?
- What's one situation I handled well emotionally—and how?

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Mindset and Mental Framing

Your thoughts shape your performance. Reframing is the practice of taking control of your inner voice when it matters most.

1. Create distance between yourself and your thoughts.

You cannot control your thoughts, but you can control how you relate to them. Practice seeing your thoughts as passing by you in a thought cloud, or floating down a stream. This helps us find flexibility and discernment in how we relate to our thoughts.

2. Differentiate your circumstances from your thoughts about your circumstances.

What happens in competition isn't always what throws you off—it's how you interpret it. A bad call? That's the circumstance. Thinking "the ref's against me" or "I always get screwed"? That's the story. Same with mistakes: dropping the ball is one thing; telling yourself "I'm blowing it" is another. This tool helps you hit pause and separate what happened from what you're thinking about it, so you can stay grounded, stay in the game, and respond with clarity instead of spiraling.

3. Practice mental reframes to create flexibility.

You don't control results, opponents, or conditions. You do control your effort, focus, body language, and preparation. Pressure isn't danger—it's opportunity. Failure is simply feedback. Train your mind to interpret stress as a challenge to rise to, not a threat to fear. Learn to ask: "What is there for me to learn and take from this moment?"

4. Focus on Process, not outcomes.

Focusing on the process keeps your attention on what you can control—your effort, mindset, and execution—rather than getting distracted by results you can't predict. This leads to more consistent performance, less anxiety, and a stronger ability to bounce back when things don't go perfectly.

Here are some possibly open-ended journal prompts:

- Where did I shift from outcome focus to process focus today?
- What was my most powerful thought or reframe during a tough moment?
- What's one thing I can't control that I wasted energy on—and how can I let it go next time?
- What challenge showed up this week—and how did I meet it?
- What mistake taught me something valuable? What will I do differently next time?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Build the Mindset, Live the Process



Mental training isn't a quick fix—it's a lifestyle. Just like physical training, it only works if you show up consistently, do the reps, and trust the process. The tools in this journal—breathwork, emotional composure, mindset, and daily and weekly reflections—are designed to help you develop that lifestyle, one moment at a time.

High performers don't hope they'll be mentally strong when it matters—they train to be. They practice breathing with intention. They regulate emotions instead of running from them. They separate facts from stories, focus on what they can control, and recover quickly from setbacks. They use every experience—good or bad—as a chance to grow. This journal is your training ground. Every entry is a rep. Every breath is a reset. Every reflection is a chance to level up.

Keep showing up. Keep learning. Keep building a mindset that reflects the kind of competitor—and person—you want to be. Because the goal isn't just to perform better. It's to live and compete with purpose, presence, and pride in how you carry yourself, no matter the outcome.



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Thank You

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