

# WEEK 13 TIP - THE POWER OF VISUALIZATION

## **Five Tips that will Change your Experience**

**by Matt Neason**

Visualization is one of the primary technologies used in sports psychology. I'm a big believer in the phrase, "What happens out there is a result of what happens in here" (as he taps his head). In simple terms, this means your performance is often the result of what's happening inside your head, or more specifically the movies and soundtracks playing inside your head.

In this article I'll reveal five key tips to get you started in producing more potent results in your sport by tapping the power of visualization.

### **Tip 1 – Practice makes perfect**

If you struggle with visualization, then I have some comforting news for you. You're normal. Sure, there are some people who have the ability to close their eyes and instantly bring up crystal clear images, but for many of us this is a skill that needs to be developed over time. With practice however, everyone has the ability to visualize.

There are two key principles to keep in mind when practicing visualization. The first is, your practice needs to be consistent. 10 minutes a day every day, will always beat an intense hour long session once a week. It helps to make a commitment to practice your visualization the same time every day. First thing in the morning as close to waking as possible is ideal. This is

because the mind is still slightly lucid at this time, which makes it easier to conjure up images.

The second key principle is you need to stay positive. Even if you can't summon crystal clear images yet, you will still gain huge benefits from your visualization practice. It still works. Just connect to the image in whatever way you can. For some people that will be feeling the image, or just getting a sense of what it might look like. Wherever your current level is, nurture it and allow it to grow.

### **Tip 2 – Visualize what you want**

One of the most powerful effects of good visualization is that it programs the subconscious brain. You want to think of the subconscious brain as a self-guiding missile. When a self-guiding missile is fired, it starts moving towards its programmed target. As it moves towards its target it assesses its coordinates in relation to the target, and makes mini adjustments to correct its path. Our subconscious brain works in the same way. It identifies our coordinates and naturally moves us towards our target.

The problem with most people is that they program their subconscious mind with negative coordinates. They visualize images of failure, they replay mistakes, they think about negative scenarios that might happen, and picture the negative consequences that may arise. Unfortunately the subconscious mind doesn't judge. It doesn't say "those coordinates are negative so I'll just ignore them". In that way it's very similar to the GPS system in your car. The GPS doesn't judge, it simply takes you to the programmed destination. The theatre of your mind is the one place where you can ensure success. You can

execute skills flawlessly, you can dominate your competition, and you can ensure victory. By visualizing success, you program your subconscious to move towards success.

### **Tip 3 – Shift perspective**

Let's do a quick exercise. In a moment I'll ask you to close your eyes, and take your awareness to your breath. Trace the movement of the breath through your body. If possible, follow it all the way to your belly, and then back up, releasing any tension as you go. With each breath you relax a little more. As you continue to relax, bring up an image of you in the sporting arena, competing. Where is this competition being held at? Who are you competing against? See if you can involve all the senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? Go a little deeper. What do you smell? Play around with this image of yourself. See yourself performing at your very best. Give yourself permission to dream, to push your current boundaries. Ok, so once you've done this and feel like you've really completely connected to this vision, read on.

When you saw yourself performing, what was the vision of yourself like? Was it as though you were watching yourself on a TV screen, essentially seeing your entire body as well as everything around you? Or was it more like you were looking out from your body, seeing things exactly as you would if you were there for real? Maybe you flicked between these two perspectives. We refer to these perspectives as being disassociated (the first one) and being associated (the second one). Generally, people have a preference one way or the other. Sometimes their preferences may change, depending on the

goal of the visualization, which is actually a skill you want to develop.

It is commonly accepted that being associated in visualization (looking out from your body just as you would if you were really there) is the more powerful of the two perspectives. Being associated helps you connect to the feeling of the visualization, which as you'll see shortly is critically important. However, being disassociated also has some really valuable uses. As an example, in gymnastics or diving, it can be useful for an athlete to disassociate from the visualization to better understand the nuances of how their body looks when they move. Other useful times to disassociate include working through a painful experience to gain wisdom from it, or in the initial stages of visualizing a performance that is completely outside your current reality. The key is, play around with being both associated and disassociated and find out what works best for you.

#### **Tip 4 – Pump it up**

The visualization is important, but what's even more important is the feeling it creates inside of you. A visualization without feeling is like a car without fuel. Feelings lead to emotions, and emotions are the fuel of your performance. Create powerful emotions, and you'll create powerful performance states. Based on this, a huge key to visualization is pumping the experience, or in other words increasing the intensity of your emotions. There are a number of ways you can do this. Two that I'll focus on here are 'painting with more color' and 'spinning the dial'. Briefly go back to your earlier visualization. Was your visualization in color or in black and white? If it was color, I want

you to quickly rerun your visualization, but this time make the images black and white. Alternatively, if it was originally in black and white, do the same as above but this time make the images full color. What did you notice? When you add color and brightness to your visualization, you add more energy to it. Your emotions intensify. You can play around with this experience. Make your images even more colorful. Make them even brighter. If you can, make them so bright that they glow. Learning to 'paint with more color' will dramatically increase the potency of your visualizations.

The second technique you can use is 'spinning the dial'. 'Spinning the dial' can be used as a stand alone technique, or in conjunction with 'painting with more color'. Concentrate on the feelings you're currently experiencing. If you can, give it a name. As you do this see a dial appear in front of you, like the volume knob you'd find on a stereo system. This dial is connected to the intensity of your visualization. Turning the dial up increases the intensity of the emotions you feel, whilst turning it down reduces the intensity of the emotions you feel. As you reach out and take hold of the dial, see that it is set to 3. Holding the dial now, slightly turn it to the left, turning the level down to a 2. As you do this notice the intensity of your current experience slightly fading. Ok, now stop. Instead turn the dial back the other way...back up to a 3, turn it further, now to a 4, to a 5, the intensity of your experience increasing, becoming stronger. Turn it up to a 6, up to a 7, an 8...more and more intense. Keep going now, up to a 9 and finally up to a 10, leaving you radiating with the most incredible feeling. These two methods are great

for beginners. Both are very simple, yet highly effective ways to pump your visualization.

### **Tip 5 – Follow a system**

Most people have a haphazard approach to visualization. The process involves closing their eyes and just doing it. Separate yourself from the pack. Follow a system. Following a system is important because of the nature of visualization. You close your eyes, you relax physically, you relax mentally. You bring up the images of yourself performing at your absolute best, and 10 minutes later you catch yourself daydreaming, thinking about an upcoming holiday destination. Don't worry, this used to be me. The nature of the mind is that it wanders. With practice, you will develop better control of your visualization.

The 6 Step Visualization System 1. Physically relax. 2. Mentally relax. 3. Connect to your ideal learning state. 4. Visualize yourself performing at your absolute peak. 5. Pump it up and anchor the experience. 6. Close session bringing new learning's and developments with you.

**Article by Matt Neason**, a leading Australian Peak Performance consultant and founder of Peak Performance Sports.

**All links were deleted because none of them worked.**

## WEEK 12 TIP

So, we are all stuck inside. It is bad enough if you have a pool table. Pity those poor folks without one.

**For those of you without access to a table** you can still keep your stroke true. Find a straight line you can bridge over (the

line in a kitchen table with a leaf works great or you can lay a string straight across a table). Set up over the line and stroke back and forth along the line.

This will keep your stroke straight until you can get back on a table and start knocking some balls in again.

**For those of us with a pool table** Dale Has come up with a way to keep us sharp:

This week's challenge is to set up a break shot on the left side of the rack and the cue ball placed anywhere above the two side pockets. See how many total balls you can run doing this three times. So far the top score so far is 33.

## WEEK 11 TIP

### CENTER BALL?

So, what do we mean by hitting center ball? True center ball is that point inside the sphere at the middle of the ball. OK, we can't hit that. So, let's say we need to hit the intersection of the vertical axis and the horizontal axis of the ball.

Now that we have defined it, how do we strike that point. Take the one ball (it is closest in color to the cue ball) and set it so the 1 faces you, right side up, at the point equal distance from the top and bottom. Take your time and make sure you are right in the middle top to bottom and left to right. Heavily chalk you cue tip and stroke the one ball hitting the intersection of the vertical and horizontal axis. OK, that **is** stupid, hit the middle of the ball.

Now, look at the 1 on the one ball and see where the chalk mark is. Don't be surprised if you are not in the middle of the ball. There is an optical illusion that makes the cue tip seem that is lower on the ball than it really is. This is because we are looking down on the ball over the end of our cue stick. It looks like we are hitting lower than we really are.

If that wasn't bad enough there is another problem. It is a perception and setup issue that is called the **Vertical Axis Perception Error**. It is caused when your eyes are not correctly aligned above the shot line so that your brain can accurately see the center of the cue ball. We refer to the correct alignment location as your “**perception center**” and it can be different for each player. For some players, it's under an eye. For others, it's elsewhere. To correct this, you have to identify your personal “**perception center**” and get it over your cue.

Let's look at the symptoms first. Among players with this issue, right-handers usually hit the left side of the vertical axis of the cue ball and it looks to them like they are hitting center. Left-handers hit the right side. We trust our eyes that we're lined up to the shots as we see them, but maybe, just maybe, we're just not seeing them correctly. If we aren't hitting the cue ball on the vertical axis, it will be hard to trust your aim because of **squirt** and **throw effects**.

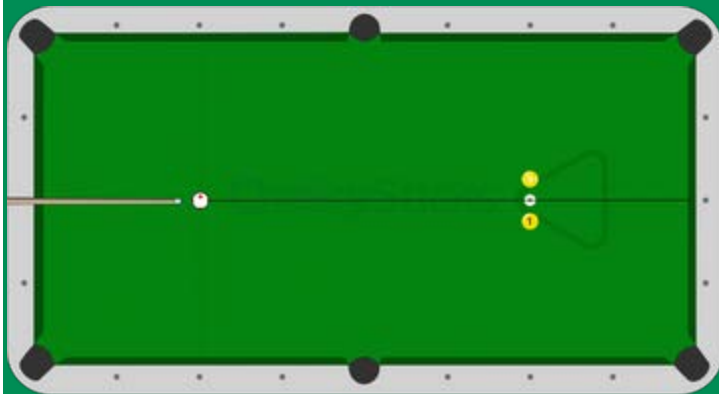
You have to train yourself to know where the center of the ball is. And then you need of course need to train yourself to hit that point. Refer back to the drill above with the one ball.



When the cue ball is hit on the vertical axis, it goes in the direction the cue stick is pointing. That is an important point. When we hit the cue ball off the vertical axis, we have to deal with squirt, curve and throw. Especially when we have a straight in shot. When you hit an object ball full, spin induced throw is greatest. This is why straight in shots are so hard to make, especially if you are not hitting the center of the cue ball.

## WEEK 10 TIP

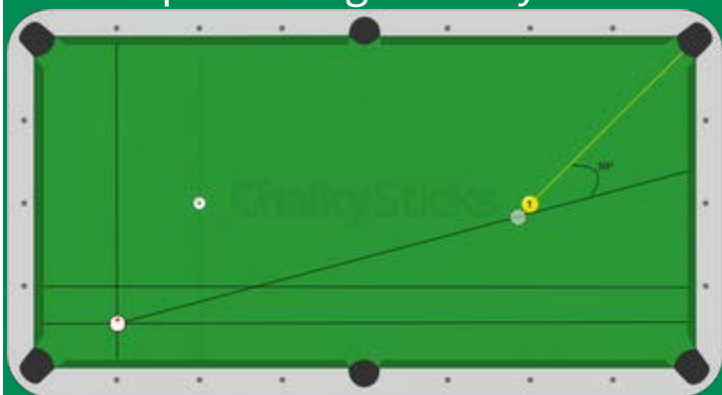
### HERE ARE (3) SHOTS THAT YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR FRIEND:



**1. Hit the cue ball dead straight.** You usually see this shot performed by shooting the cue ball to the end rail and back while holding the cue stick in place and letting the cue ball hit the end of the stick. In this version you'll place balls equally apart either side of the foot spot and try to bank the cue ball back through the 2 balls. See how close you can place the balls together and still bank the cue ball between them.



2. **Rail shots.** Place the cue ball on the head spot and the object balls at the diamonds on the rails as shown. Sink a shot and leave the cue ball where it lands. Keep sinking shots until you miss. When you miss, place the cue ball back on the head spot and keep shooting. Count your turns to make them all.



3. **Spot shot.** This is not a trick or skill shot. This is just a shot that comes up all the time and needs to be mastered. I like to shoot for solid targets like the edge of the ball. Here is an illustration of where and how to place and target the cue ball to hit exactly  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the spotted ball to make it in the corner pocket.

# WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?

**By Mike Ezyk**

**Sound familiar? We've all said it. Usually it's at the point when we're so confident, that missing a shot isn't even on the radar. We walk away shaking our head wondering what went wrong. We know that the possibility of a miss is always there, but sometimes that option just doesn't exist until it happens. I'm not talking about that "hanger" that just didn't fall, I'm looking at the one that missed by a mile and was even a shock to your opponent. Let's try to make some sense of this and propose some solutions.**

**Attitude – Were you riding that over confidence high? The one that says, "I don't need those stinking fundamentals"? Or, maybe you got scared and felt that something embarrassing could happen and you completely lost your focus. Many times, the smallest distraction can throw a wrench in your routine. Personally, I have found myself shooting like Willie Mosconi one minute and Stevie Wonder the next.**

**The solution is as simple as confidence. Real confidence comes from "playing within yourself". Understand your strengths and limitations. If an upcoming shot isn't in your "strike zone" don't take it, play safe. Now if your shooting particularly well and something is just outside of your sweet spot, go for it. Just don't take that flier that's one in a million. How do you build confidence? Practice "on the**

**edge” of your ability shots. Forget the “fliers”. As you build out from the edges, you’ll eventually get to the tougher shots. The fact is you don’t need to master the tougher shots. Properly played, you should have a litany of easy shots to work with. You know the old saying “he never had a tough shot”. Why not you?**

**Fundamentals – Don’t be fooled, there is nothing like the basics. I have had several times in my life when I haven’t played for years at a time. Each time that I returned, I started from scratch with the basics to reacquaint myself. Without exception, each time, I learned something that I didn’t know or didn’t previously understand. Allison Fisher would spend hours at a time just rehearsing her stance at the table, over and over again. Willie Mosconi would shoot 100 balls every day before breakfast. Work on your routine and don’t deviate. Familiarity will breed confidence. Revisit your fundamentals. Are you holding your cue comfortably? Is your stroke straight? Is your aiming eye directly over the cue? Did you know that if your eye position is off center to the cue to the right, your shot will be over cut to the right, and vice versa? Mosconi shot with the cue centered between his eyes. Earl Strickland shoots directly off his right eye. Can you see and shoot straight? Line your straight shot up and close one eye then the other. Which one is in line with the shaft? Do you use a lot of English? Stop it! Cleanse yourself by wiping all the chalk from your cue tip. Practice shooting without chalk until you get a feel for where the cue ball goes naturally. English is like a drug, the more you use it the more**

**you think you need it. You don't. Try to develop a complete routine that includes the following:**

**1. Read the table – look it all over by circling the table. Check for “dead” balls, trouble spots and “key” balls that can open those trouble spots. Understand your plan of attack and pursue it confidently.**

**2. Get into your shooting position already knowing what to do. Get your body and aim adjusted into your standard comfortable routine. Stop thinking and do what comes naturally. Execute the shot.**

**3. Let what happens happen. When you make the shot, repeat everything for the next one. If you miss the shot, accept it. Don't fret over it. You should be able to get over it before the balls quit rolling.**

**4. When you're sitting in the chair watching your opponent, pay close attention to how they play their shots. Ask yourself how you would do it then watch how they did it. There are (2) parts to learning, Information (something that you didn't know before) and Confirmation (something that reinforces that which you already know or suspect). Either way you'll be satisfied.**

## WEEK 8 TIP

**Where you have clumps of three or four balls on both side of the table, try to play back and forth between the sets so you don't get stuck on only one pocket later. A huge tip learned the hard way is to shoot the middle of three balls to open up cue ball paths for later use.**

## WEEK 7 TIP

**Take long sequences of balls apart with precision. When you're not sure which balls to play in which order, sequence "outside-in", meaning, take off every "corner-most" ball, ridding trouble early and leaving lots of little stop shots for your convenience late in the rack.**

## WEEK 6 TIP

**Forget playing fancy spin on the third ball in combinations. Spin doesn't transfer much past the second ball. That third ball in a line or cluster, however, is what you eyeball to see if it will throw into or is dead on a pocket.**

## WEEK 5 WINTER 2020

**When opening the rack, look to hit the rack with less force if you do not have a great angle. Work towards a secondary break to further open the rack. This is especially important on those days when the humidity is high or the balls don't seem to be separating easily.**

**Try to hit the corner balls of the rack so your cue ball doesn't die against the pack. Again, too hard a stroke can be a problem, when the balls hit the cushion and come back into the stack to block other balls.**

## WEEK 4 WINTER 2020

**You have three needs on any of those 15th ball breaks 1) pocket the break ball, 2) bust that cluster, and 3) get the cue ball free. Smooth strokes tend to bust racks better than powering through so Forget #2 and save the hard strokes for other times.**

## WEEK 3 WINTER 2020

**Don't duck tough shots and think conservative play guarantees a win. Defense can win football games between interceptions, run for touchdowns and safeties, but only scoring points on the offensive wins Straight Pool games.**

**Safeties are there to set up an offensive run. Safety battles end on a "Failed Safe".**

## WEEK 2 WINTER 2020

**As you play straight pool more often. You will notice that when you go into a rack from the top and hit the side if you apply inside bottom, the cue ball is less likely to get trapped. What is the reason for this?**

**You're "spinning off of" the rack, in a direction where the spin itself has maximum effect (i.e. it's not canceled by the force or direction of the cue ball).**

**Bobby Hunter was mentioning in one of the DCC 14.1 Challenge streams that John Schmidt uses low-inside on a lot of his standard side-of-the-rack break shots, not only to avoid getting glued to the rack, but also to bounce out back to the long rail, and spin out to the center of the table.**



# WEEK 1 WINTER 2020

**Level cue and stroke through center ball. Also known as the 101 drill. Set your cue ball on the head spot, stroke to hit the foot center diamond. If you shot center ball the cue ball will come back and hit your cue tip. I watched Ray Martin do this 25 times in a row at various speeds .**

