

BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME  
**SPORT PSYCHOLOGY**  
&  
**MENTAL TRAINING**

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



## FLOW STATE PROTOCOL

*A Practical Guide to Entering Deep Focus & Effortless Performance*

Flow is a mental state where action and awareness merge, time distorts, and performance feels effortless yet precise.


Flow does **not** come from forcing concentration—it emerges when specific conditions are met.

Move through this protocol **before or during performance** to set those conditions deliberately.

### The Flow State Protocol (At a Glance)

1. **Clarify the Goal**  
Know exactly what you are trying to do *right now*.
2. **Match Challenge to Skill**  
The task should stretch you—without overwhelming you.
3. **Anchor Attention**  
Lock your focus onto one clear sensory cue.
4. **Tune Into Feedback**  
Sense how you're doing in real time, without judgment.
5. **Let Action Lead**  
Stop thinking. Allow trained movements to run.
6. **Drop Self-Consciousness**  
Shift attention away from yourself and into the task.
7. **Trust the Process**  
Stay steady, calm, and controlled—without forcing.
8. **Allow Time to Fade**  
Stay absorbed; time distortion will follow naturally.

Detailed Explanation Continued 



# BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME

## SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

### &

## MENTAL TRAINING

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



## 1. Clear Goal: Do You Know Exactly What You're Doing?

Flow requires a **clear, immediate objective**—not a vague intention.

### Practice Instruction

- Define **one simple goal** for the next phase:
  - *This rally*
  - *This lap*
  - *This set*
  - *This drill*
- The goal must answer:  
“**What am I trying to do right now?**”
- Avoid outcome goals (win / result). Focus on **task execution**.

Flow begins when the mind knows where to point its attention.

---

## 2. Challenge–Skill Balance: Is the Task Demanding but Doable?

Flow occurs when the challenge is **slightly above your comfort zone**, but not overwhelming.


### Practice Instruction

- If you feel:
  - **Bored** → Increase difficulty slightly
  - **Anxious** → Simplify the task
- Ask yourself:
  - *“Is this pushing me—but not breaking me?”*
- Adjust intensity, speed, or complexity—not effort.

Too easy = boredom.

Too hard = anxiety.

Flow lives in between.



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME  
**SPORT PSYCHOLOGY**  
&  
**MENTAL TRAINING**

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



---

### 3. Deep Concentration: Is Your Attention Fully Absorbed?

Flow requires **undivided attention on the task**, not on thoughts about performance.

#### Practice Instruction

- Pick **one attentional anchor**:
  - Feel of the equipment
  - Rhythm of movement
  - Contact point
  - Your breath
- When the mind wanders:
  - Don't fight it
  - Gently return to the anchor

Attention follows sensation faster than thought.


---

### 4. Immediate Feedback: Can You Sense How You're Doing?

Flow depends on **real-time feedback**, even without external validation.

#### Practice Instruction

- Tune into **internal cues**:
  - Timing
  - Balance
  - Smoothness
  - Accuracy of movement
- Ask after each attempt:
  - *"Did that feel closer or farther from ideal?"*
- Avoid judging—**just notice**.



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME  
**SPORT PSYCHOLOGY**  
&  
**MENTAL TRAINING**

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



Feedback keeps the mind engaged without overthinking.

---

## 5. Action–Awareness Merge: Are You Doing Without Thinking?

In Flow, actions happen **automatically**, without conscious control.

### Practice Instruction

- Stop giving verbal instructions mid-action
- Let the body execute what it already knows
- Replace thinking with sensing:
  - *Feel* instead of *tell*
- Trust trained patterns

Thinking is for training.  
Flow is for execution.

---

## 6. Loss of Self-Consciousness: Are You Forgetting Yourself?

Flow fades when attention turns inward toward ego, judgment, or appearance.

### Practice Instruction

- Shift focus from:
  - *How do I look?*
  - *What if I fail?*
- To:
  - Task rhythm
  - External target
  - Environmental cues
- Let performance absorb identity



# BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME

## SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

### &

## MENTAL TRAINING

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



Flow begins when the “self” steps aside.

---

## 7. Sense of Control: Do You Feel Steady, Not Forced?

Flow includes a **quiet sense of control**, even under pressure.

### Practice Instruction

- Avoid forcing outcomes
- Trust preparation over effort
- Use steady routines to ground yourself:
  - Same entry ritual
  - Same reset behavior
- Calm does not mean low intensity

Control in Flow is felt—not imposed.

---

## 8. Altered Sense of Time: Let Time Take Care of Itself

Time distortion is a **result**, not a goal.

### Practice Instruction


- Do not chase the feeling of “losing time”
- Stay engaged with the task
- The deeper the absorption, the more time fades naturally

Flow cannot be chased. It arrives when conditions are right.

---

## When Flow Feels Blocked

If Flow doesn't emerge:



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME  
**SPORT PSYCHOLOGY**  
&  
**MENTAL TRAINING**

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



- Check **which component is missing**
- Adjust **one variable only**
- Return attention to **process, not outcome**

Flow is not an on/off switch—it's a **state you allow**, not force.

---

**Keep training. Keep refining. Keep flowing!**