



# BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME

## SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

### &

## MENTAL TRAINING

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CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



## Pre-Performance Belief Protocol

### Purpose:

This protocol is designed to **raise your self-belief before performance**—not by hype or false confidence, but by **activating evidence, memory, focus, and emotional regulation systems in the brain.**

It works for:

- Sports competitions
- Stage performances
- Exams, interviews, public speaking
- Any environment where **pressure is high and outcomes matter**

Self-belief before performance is not about convincing yourself—you're great.

It's about **reminding your nervous system that you are prepared, capable, and safe to perform.**


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## The 7-Step Protocol (At a Glance)

1. Recall your strengths
2. Record past wins (4 wins)
3. Visualize the goal
4. Revise your strategy
5. Calm the nerves with box breathing (2 minutes)
6. Say your affirmation
7. Listen to optimal music

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Detailed Explanation Continued [↓](#)



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## 1. Recall Your Strengths

### The Science

Under pressure, the brain shows a **negative bias**—the amygdala becomes more active and filters information toward threat and doubt. Actively recalling strengths re-engages the **prefrontal cortex**, which restores balance, confidence, and decision-making.

### Instructions

Silently or on paper, list:

- 3 technical strengths
- 2 physical strengths
- 1 mental or personality strength

Be specific. Not “*I’m good*”—but *why* you’re good.

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## 2. Record Past Wins (Write 4 Wins)

### The Science

Memory recall of success activates the same neural circuits as real achievement. This **conditions the brain toward expectancy of success**, reducing uncertainty and fear.


### Instructions

Write **4 past wins**—big or small:

- A match you handled well
- A moment you stayed composed
- A situation you adapted under pressure

These are **proof**, not motivation.

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### 3. Visualize the Goal

#### The Science

The brain does not fully differentiate between real and imagined action. Visualization activates **motor, sensory, and emotional circuits**, priming your system for execution.

#### Instructions

Close your eyes and visualize:

- yourself entering the performance
- executing key actions smoothly
- finishing strong

Keep it **short, positive, and present-tense**.

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### 4. Calm the Nerves: Box Breathing (2 Minutes)

#### The Science

Box breathing down-regulates the sympathetic nervous system and activates the **parasympathetic (calming) response**, lowering heart rate and mental noise.


#### Instructions

For 2 minutes:

- Inhale – 4 seconds
- Hold – 4 seconds
- Exhale – 4 seconds
- Hold – 4 seconds

Let your body settle before moving forward.

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## 5. Revise Your Strategy

### The Science

Clarity reduces anxiety. When the brain knows *what to do next*, uncertainty drops and confidence rises.

### Instructions

Mentally review:

- your opening plan
- one adjustment you'll make if needed
- your focus cue

You're reminding yourself: **this is familiar territory.**

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## 6. Say Your Affirmation

### The Science

Affirmations act as **attention filters**. They guide the brain toward confidence-relevant information and reduce mental noise under pressure.


### Instructions

Choose **one short, believable statement** and **one instructional statement**, such as:

- "I am ready."
- "I trust my training."
- "Focus on the ball"
- "Stay center"

Say it slowly, once or twice—nothing forced.

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## 7. Use Music to Get Into Your Zone

### The Science

Music influences emotional arousal, rhythm, and motivation. The right music helps you enter a **familiar, confident performance state**.

### Instructions

- Use music briefly before performance if possible
- Choose tracks that energize or ground you—based on your need
- Stop the music before you enter the final performance environment

Let the **state carry forward**, not the sound.

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## Final Note

This protocol is not about forcing confidence.

It's about **remembering who you are when pressure tries to make you forget**.

You've prepared.

You've earned this moment.

Now allow your training to speak.

**Wishing you clarity, calm, and a strong performance.**