



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

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
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## Visualization Protocol

*A structured mental rehearsal that programs your brain for confident, composed, and powerful performance.*

### What is Visualization?

Visualization is a mental rehearsal of your desired performance in detail.

When you visualize, you see yourself executing skills perfectly, handling pressure calmly, and finishing strong. You experience success before it physically happens.

Done correctly, visualization builds confidence, clarity, emotional control, and belief.

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### The Science Behind Visualization

**Your brain does not fully differentiate between real and vividly imagined action.**


When you visualize:

- **Motor and pre-motor cortex** areas activate, strengthening movement patterns
- **Visual and sensory systems** prepare you for execution
- The prefrontal cortex enhances decision-making and control
- **Mirror neurons** fire, simulating real performance
- Emotional circuits get conditioned toward confidence instead of fear

You are not just imagining success.

You are neurologically rehearsing it.

Repeated mental rehearsal builds familiarity.



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Familiarity reduces fear.

Reduced fear improves performance.

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## Before You Begin

Follow the same discipline as meditation practice

- Sit in a quiet place
- No music (the best visualization is self-guided)
- Back straight but relaxed
- Hands resting comfortably
- Eyes closed
- Take 10 slow breaths to settle your body

Do not rush this stage.

A calm body creates a focused mind.

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## The 10-Step Visualization Process


This is your structured rehearsal. Move step by step.

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### Step 1: Arrive in the Environment

See where you are.

- Stadium, court, track, pool, stage



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- Notice the light, temperature, sounds
- Observe distances, colors, positions

Ask yourself:

Where am I? What time is it? What am I wearing?

Make it real.

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### **Step 2: Begin Your Preparation**

See yourself preparing calmly.

- Packing your bag
- Wearing your gear
- Walking toward the performance area
- Meeting teammates
- Hearing your coach


You are composed. Focused. Ready.

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### **Step 3: Warm Up With Awareness**

Feel your body moving.

- Light jog
- Stretching
- Swinging your racket
- Touching the ball



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- Adjusting your grip

Start activating sensory detail.

What does the ground feel like?

What does your equipment feel like in your hands?

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#### **Step 4: Take Position**

Now step into your starting position.

Notice:

- Where is everyone standing?
- Where is your opponent?
- Where is the ball?
- Where is your focus?

Slow everything down.


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#### **Step 5: Execute the First Movement (Slow Motion)**

Play the first action in slow motion.

If it is a serve:

- Slide your foot back
- Toss the ball
- Feel the breath
- Swing through



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- Hear contact

- Feel the follow through

One movement can last minutes in your mind.

Clarity builds confidence.

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### **Step 6: Build the Sequence**

Now move into a longer rally or sequence.

- Pass

- Turn

- Sprint

- Strike

- Recover

- Adjust

Let the rhythm build naturally.

Stay in present tense:

“I move.”


“I strike.”

“I recover.”

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### **Step 7: Introduce a Tough Moment**

Now deliberately visualize pressure.



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- You are slightly behind
- The crowd is loud
- The opponent is strong

Notice the emotion.

Then regulate it.

- Breathe
- Stay centered
- Trust your skill

You respond with calm execution.

This step trains emotional resilience.

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### **Step 8: Stay Emotionally Centered**

Do not rush.


Feel:

- Focus
- Control
- Composure
- Determination

You are steady even when intensity rises.

Your body stays aligned.

Your mind stays clear.



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### **Step 9: Execute the Winning Action**

Now see the decisive moment.

- The final shot
- The final sprint
- The final stroke
- The perfect landing

See it clearly.

Feel it fully.

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### **Step 10: Experience the Celebration**

Do not skip this step.

- Hear the crowd
- Feel your breath
- See the scoreboard
- Feel pride
- Feel relief
- Feel joy

Walk through:

- Shaking hands
- Receiving praise



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- Standing on the podium
- Holding the trophy
- Sleeping peacefully afterward

End on a high emotional note.

Your nervous system remembers endings.

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## Types of Visualization

You can structure sessions in three categories:

### 1. Preparation Visualization

Rehearse everything before competition.

### 2. Action Visualization

Rehearse technical execution and movement patterns.

### 3. Result Visualization

Rehearse the successful outcome and emotional reward.


Use all three across the week.

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## Rules of Effective Visualization

### 1. Keep It Positive

Visualize what you want, not what you fear.



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If negativity appears, pause and reset.

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## 2. Keep It Detailed

Ask:

- a. Where am I? (Stadium, home, gym, street)
- b. What is the temperature, color of the sky, distance between me and others? What am I wearing? What time of day is it?
- c. How fast or slow are my movements? Can I feel the pressure of the ball/bat/racket/shoes against my hands and feet? How are my strokes?
- d. What muscles in my body are tense? Where is my focus? What is happening right now?


Superficial imagery creates weak rehearsal. Detail creates neural strength.

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## 3. Use Multiple Senses

We have 5 senses - what we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. Use as many senses as you can when you visualize to make it realistic.

- a. **Vision** - What can I see? How is my racket moving? What color jersey am I wearing? Where is the opponent standing? Where is the ball? How fast is it moving?
- b. **Audio** - What sounds can I hear? Swing of the bat in the air? Smack of the ball? Wiping powder on my palms? Sound of my jacket zipping up? What is the coach saying? Sound of the whistle? Crowd shouting? Teammates saying something? Sound of my breath?
- c. **Touch** - Feel the tension in your grip, the surface of the ball, the fine hairs on the tennis ball, the creases in the cricket bat, the wetness of swimming goggles, the



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gloves grip of a goalkeeper, the touch of the grass, handshakes, high-fives, feeling your feet on the ground.

- d. **Smell** - What can you smell? The grass? Equipment? Mustiness of the stadium? Smell of new shoes? You know your sport.
- e. **Taste** - A sip of water between rallies, an energy bar? Taste of your favorite food at your victory celebration party? Use as many senses as you can. It is not compulsory to always use smell and taste as they can be few.

The more senses you use, the stronger the brain activation.

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#### **4. Visualize in Slow Motion**

Slow everything down.

Do not rush through the action. One single movement can take several minutes in your mind.


For example, when visualizing a serve, break it down to micro-movements: observe every movement of sliding your foot back, tossing the ball in the air, taking a short breath, moving your arm behind, and feeling the pressure of the racket on the ball, the rebound of your body, the follow through of your stroke, moving your foot forward to the next position on court, bending lower, observing the opponent. Break everything down.

The slower you go, the clearer you see.

The clearer you see, the stronger the neural imprint.

Precision in slow motion builds confidence in real speed.

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### **5. Stay in Present Tense**

Not: "I will win."

Instead: "I am executing perfectly. I have won"

Don't visualize seeing the future, visualize as if it is happening right now.

Your brain trains what feels current.

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### **6. Feel the Emotions**

Do not visualize mechanically.

Feel:

- Confidence
- Excitement
- Pride
- Control
- Gratitude

Emotion strengthens memory encoding.


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## **Perspectives of Visualization**

### **First Person (Most Powerful)**

You see through your own eyes.

You are inside the experience.



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This is the most effective for skill transfer.

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### **Third Person**

You see yourself from the outside.

Helpful for technique correction and posture awareness.

Use first person primarily.

Add third person occasionally.

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## **Frequency**

- 10 to 15 minutes daily


Any of the possible times below can work:

- Anytime when free in a quiet space
- Before sleep (if not too sleepy)
- Before competition (but also daily)
- After journaling (when the mind is decluttered)
- After breathing exercises (when the mind is calm)
- After meditation (when the mind is focused)

Consistency builds familiarity.

Familiarity builds belief.

**Belief builds performance.**



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## Final Note

Visualization is not fantasy.

It is rehearsal.

You are not hoping to perform well.

You are training your brain to be familiar with excellence.

Practice it regularly with discipline.

Program the mind with clarity, and the body delivers with precision.

**Keep Visualizing! :)**

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