



BRING YOUR MIND TO THE GAME
SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
&
MENTAL TRAINING

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The Pain Override Protocol

How the Brain Can Temporarily Turn Down Pain During High-Intensity Performance

Purpose

This protocol helps performers understand and train a powerful mental shift that sometimes appears in extreme effort moments.

You may have experienced it before.

You are exhausted.

Your body hurts.

Everything says stop.

And yet something inside you suddenly becomes very focused.

Pain fades into the background.

You keep going.


This is not magic.

It is a real neurological response that occurs when the brain decides that **performance matters more than the pain signals arriving from the body**.

This protocol teaches you how to guide your mind into that focused state so discomfort does not automatically end your effort.

It does **not ignore injury** or encourage reckless behavior.

It trains your brain to manage **temporary fatigue and pain signals** so you can stay composed and perform when the moment becomes demanding.



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What Happens in Your Brain Under Extreme Effort?

When pain appears during intense performance, the body sends strong signals to the brain saying:

“Slow down.”

“Protect the body.”

“Stop the activity.”

Normally, the brain listens.

But in certain moments the brain changes priorities.

When a situation feels extremely important to your goals or identity, the brain can trigger a powerful response:

It temporarily reduces how strongly pain is experienced.

This happens through several neurological shifts:

- The brain releases natural pain-reducing chemicals that dampen pain signals
- Stress hormones increase alertness and energy
- Attention becomes extremely narrow and focused

At the same time, the part of the brain responsible for overthinking becomes less active.

Instead of analyzing every sensation, the brain shifts into **action mode**.


The result is a state where discomfort is still present, but it stops dominating your attention.

Your focus becomes extremely simple.

Just the next action.

The next movement.

The next moment.



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The Pain Override Protocol

Use this process during **high effort moments**, intense training sessions, or demanding competitive situations.

The goal is not to eliminate pain.

The goal is to **control where your attention goes**.

Step 1 — Accept the Signal (2 seconds)

First, acknowledge what your body is telling you.

Do not panic.

Do not dramatize it.

Simply recognize the signal.

Internally say something neutral such as:


- “I feel it.”
- “Tired.”
- “Okay.”

This step is important.

Resistance increases emotional reaction.

Acknowledgment keeps your mind steady.

You are noticing the sensation without letting it control your behavior.



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Step 2 — Narrow the Target (3 seconds)

Pain becomes overwhelming when attention spreads across everything.

Instead, shrink your focus.

Do not think about:

- How tired you are
- How long remains
- Whether you will finish

Focus only on **one immediate task**.

Examples:

- The next movement
- The next step
- The next action
- The next 5 seconds

When attention narrows, the brain stops amplifying discomfort signals.

Your nervous system begins prioritizing execution instead of evaluation.


This is the same attentional principle used in task-focus training during pressure situations.

Step 3 — Use a Cue Word (1 second)

Choose one simple cue word that represents forward action.

Examples:

- “Next”



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- “Go”
- “Attack”
- “One”

Cue words work because they occupy the conscious mind just enough to prevent overthinking.

This allows trained motor skills to run automatically instead of being disrupted by doubt or fatigue.

Say the word internally.

Then act.

Step 4 — Commit to the Action

Now execute the next action fully.

Not cautiously.

Not halfway.

Fully commit.


Your brain reads commitment as a signal that the task is still meaningful.

This reinforces the neurological shift that temporarily reduces the intensity of pain signals.

Then repeat the cycle:

Notice → Narrow focus → Cue word → Execute.

One moment at a time.



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What This Protocol Trains

With practice, this routine develops:

- Greater tolerance for discomfort
- Stronger attentional control
- Reduced emotional reaction to fatigue
- Faster decision making under stress
- Confidence in difficult moments

You are teaching your brain something powerful:

Pain is information.

It does not automatically get to decide the outcome.

Important Reminder

This protocol is meant for **temporary fatigue or discomfort during intense effort**.

It should **never override real injury signals**.

Learning the difference between effort discomfort and injury is part of becoming an experienced performer.

Use this skill wisely.

Because the performers who succeed in demanding moments are not the ones who feel nothing.

They are the ones who **stay focused even when feeling everything**.

Keep going!