

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

**KUNASHNI PARIKH**  
CLINICAL AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST



## The Sensory Trust Protocol

*How to Perform When You Stop Over-Controlling the Skill*

### Purpose

This protocol helps you trust the sensory memory of a skill you have already practiced thousands of times.

Many performers struggle in important moments not because they lack ability, but because they begin **trying too hard to consciously control a movement that should run automatically.**

When this happens, attention becomes overly visual and analytical.

The mind begins watching itself perform.

Execution becomes rigid.


The Sensory Trust Protocol helps you shift attention away from over-control and back toward the **felt rhythm of the skill stored in your nervous system.**

This protocol can be used in:

- sports competitions
- public speaking
- presentations
- music or stage performance
- exams or interviews
- any task where skill has already been practiced extensively

The goal is simple:

Stop micromanaging the skill.



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Let the body execute what it already knows.

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## What Happens When You Try Too Hard to Control a Skill

When a skill is new, conscious attention is useful.

You think about technique, positioning, timing, and mechanics.

But once a skill is practiced repeatedly, the brain begins storing it in **automatic motor memory**.

At this stage, performance improves when the body executes the movement fluidly rather than when the mind tries to control every detail.

Under pressure, however, something different happens.

The brain's monitoring systems become more active.

You begin:

- checking mechanics
- visually inspecting every movement
- trying to guarantee a perfect outcome


This pulls attention away from the natural sensory rhythm of the skill.

Instead of performing, you begin **supervising yourself performing**.

And supervision often interferes with execution.

The performers who stay fluid in important moments are usually not the ones thinking the most.

They are the ones who trust the sensory memory of the skill.



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## The Sensory Trust Protocol

Use this routine when you notice yourself **overthinking a skill you have already mastered**.

It takes less than one minute.

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### Step 1 — Reduce Visual Over-Control (5–10 seconds)

If you notice yourself intensely watching every movement, soften your visual focus.

You do not need to stare harder to perform better.

Allow your gaze to become calm and steady rather than hyper-focused.

Some performers briefly close their eyes for a moment between actions to interrupt visual over-monitoring.

This signals to the brain that the movement does not need constant supervision.

Your goal is not to remove vision.

Your goal is to **stop micromanaging through vision**.

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### Step 2 — Regulate the Breath (10 seconds)

Take two slow breaths.

Inhale through the nose.

Exhale slowly through the mouth.

Let the exhale be longer than the inhale.



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As the breath slows, muscle tension decreases and the nervous system becomes more stable.

A calmer nervous system allows automatic motor patterns to operate more smoothly.

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### **Step 3 — Shift Attention to Sensation (10 seconds)**

Now redirect your focus from **watching the movement** to **feeling the movement**.

Follow your breathing.

Ask yourself:

- What does the movement feel like in my body?
- What is the rhythm of my breathing?
- Where do I feel balance or pressure in my body?

This sensory focus reconnects attention to the physical signals that guide skilled movement.

Many expert performers rely more on **feel, timing, and rhythm** than on conscious visual analysis.

You are reconnecting with that internal guidance system.


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### **Step 4 — Use a Trust Cue (2 seconds)**

Now introduce a simple cue word that reminds your mind to allow the skill to flow.

Examples:

- “Feel”
- “Trust”



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- “Smooth”
- “Flow”

Cue words work because they occupy the conscious mind just enough to prevent it from interfering with automatic movement.

Say the cue word internally just before execution.

Then allow the movement to happen.

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## Step 5 — Execute Without Interference

Now perform the action.

Do not monitor every detail.

Let the movement unfold.

Your muscles, nerves, and sensory systems have already practiced the sequence many times.

Your job is not to control every step.


Your job is to **allow the trained pattern to run**.

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## What This Protocol Trains

With repetition, this routine develops:

- trust in trained motor memory
- reduced overthinking under pressure
- smoother, more fluid movement



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- stronger sensory awareness during performance
- greater confidence in automatic execution

You are teaching your brain an important lesson:

Skill improves through training.

Performance improves through trust.

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## When to Practice

Practice this protocol:

- during training when you notice overthinking
- before important performances
- during breaks in competition
- during visualization sessions

The more often you rehearse sensory trust during practice, the easier it becomes to access during pressure moments.

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## Final Reminder

Many performers believe success requires **trying harder and controlling more.**

But once a skill is well learned, the opposite is often true.

The body performs best when the mind stops interfering.

Trust the repetitions.



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Trust the feel.

Let the skill express itself naturally.

Keep going! :)

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