



SHARPEN YOUR MENTAL EDGE! MAINTAINING YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE

1. STICK TO YOUR ROUTINE

Pressure situations (big tournaments, close games, match points) are not a time to “get fancy!”
Stay within your game and TRUST the skills that got you there!
Keep a consistent pre-serve routine that centers and focuses you every time.

2. POSITIVE SELF-TALK is a key to keeping up success and overcoming setbacks.

Recognize unhelpful self-statements. Sometimes they are very sneaky!
Keep a list of POSITIVE, REALISTIC statements to replace unhelpful ones
Give your TEAMMATES positive feedback about what they do well!

3. EXCESS TENSION is common in pressure situations. Keep it under control with:

A DEEP BREATH; full abdominal breathing takes practice!
RELEASE OF MUSCLE TENSION in the area(s) where it builds up the most
MENTAL IMAGERY of confident, effective performance
-Take time to CENTER YOURSELF FIRST, with deep breathing and muscle relaxation
-Use ALL OF YOUR SENSES, not just vision, for a highly DETAILED rehearsal of the skill
-Experience it from an INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE (not seeing yourself as on video)
-Simulate PRESSURE SITUATIONS in your imagery so you are READY WHEN IT COUNTS!

4. MISTAKE RITUALS help you move past errors and back into the point being played NOW.

Build a habit of using mistake rituals in practice, so you can do it automatically in matches
Choose a subtle, distinct physical movement: Brush it away, wipe it off, or hit the delete key

5. PRACTICE HOW YOU COMPETE, COMPETE HOW YOU PRACTICE

Set up pressure situations in practice with crowd noise, close scoreboard, etc. so playing under these conditions becomes “old hat.”
In matches, approach pressure situations as OPPORTUNITIES to show what you can do!