



# AROUSAL AND ANXIETY : PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

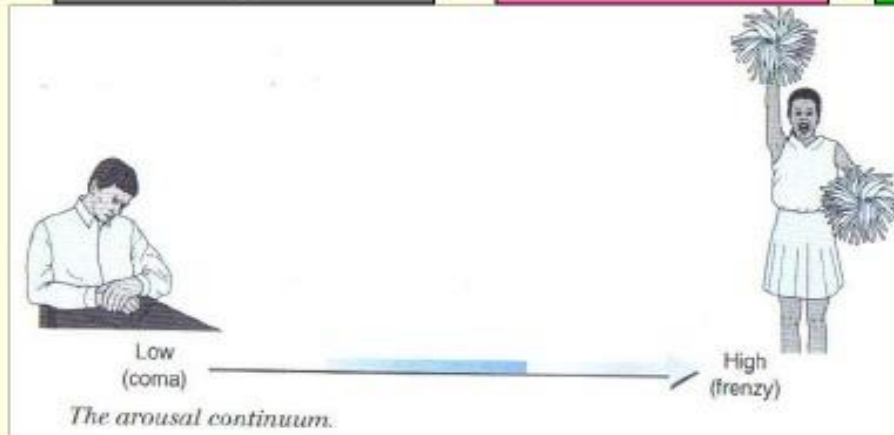
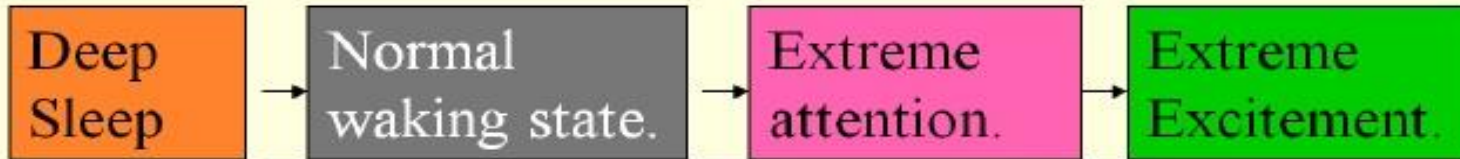


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# AROUSAL

- ⦿ Arousal enhances blood flow and oxygen in the brain, neural and musculoskeletal systems.
- ⦿ Arousal stimulates adrenalin and other stimulant hormone production.
- ⦿ Arousal that is excessively high or low hurts athletic performance.

# AROUSAL CONTINUUM



- ⦿ Arousal is a mental, emotional, and physiological state that prepares your body for action.
- ⦿ It's the readiness for action that motivates an athlete to run faster, lift heavier weights, or hit their opponent harder.
- ⦿ You need the appropriate level of arousal for the things you want to do
- ⦿ Too much or too little arousal will work against you.

# SIGNS OF UNDER AROUSAL

- ◉ Moving slowly, not getting set
- ◉ Mind wandering, being easily distracted
- ◉ Lack of concern about how one will perform
- ◉ Lack of anticipation or enthusiasm
- ◉ Heavy feeling in legs, no bounce

# SIGNS OF UNDER-ACTIVATION

## Body

- ⦿ Heavy muscles
- ⦿ Slow reactions
- ⦿ Low heart rate
- ⦿ Low Energy

## Mind

- ⦿ Bored
- ⦿ Inattentive
- ⦿ Lethargic
- ⦿ Not “up”
- ⦿ Over-confident

# AROUSAL-INDUCING TECHNIQUES

- ◉ The goal is to get athletes at an optimal level of arousal.
- ◉ Often things such as pep talks and motivational speeches can overarouse athletes.
- ◉ So if arousal is to be raised, it should be done in a deliberate fashion with awareness of optimal arousal states.

# AROUSAL-INDUCING TECHNIQUES

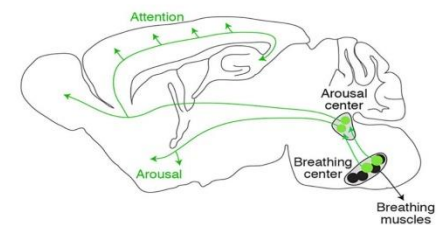
- ⦿ Increase breathing rate.
- ⦿ Act energized.
- ⦿ Use mood words and positive statements.
- ⦿ Listen to music.
- ⦿ Use energizing imagery.
- ⦿ Complete a precompetition workout.



# AROUSAL REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

## Somatic:

- Progressive relaxation: Flexion then relaxation of a muscle: teaches the difference between tension and relaxation, teaches that a muscles can not be both relaxed and tense at the same time, teaches the release of mental tension.
- Breath control: Rhythmic diaphragmatic breathing.



## **Cognitive:Relaxation response (meditation):**

- No distractions.
- Comfortable position.
- Mental device (repeating a word or thought, eg counting).
- Passive attitude: Allowing thoughts without attending to them.

## In-competition relaxation tips:

- ⦿ Smile.
- ⦿ Have fun, enjoy the situation.
- ⦿ Set up stressful situations in practice.
- ⦿ Slow down, take your time.
- ⦿ Stay focused on the present.
- ⦿ Be prepared with good strategy/game plan.

# CONTROLLING AROUSAL

Self awareness

- ⦿ Identify feelings / emotions associated with top performance ( Good performance)
- ⦿ Identify feelings / emotions associated with bad performance ( poor performance)

Visualise your Good performance and note down your feelings

Repeat for a poor performance

Note your response on the following checklist

# PERFORMANCE STATES ( CHECKLIST)

|                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |                            |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| Played extremely well    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Played extremely poorly    |
| Felt extremely relaxed   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Felt extremely anxious     |
| Felt extremely confident | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Felt extremely unconfident |
| Felt in complete control | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Had no control at all      |
| Muscles were relaxed     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Muscles were tense         |
| Felt extremely energetic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Felt extremely fatigued    |
| Self - talk was positive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Self - talk was negative   |
| Felt extremely focused   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Felt extremely unfocussed  |
| Felt effortless          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Felt great effort          |
| Had high energy          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Had low energy             |

# TIME ESTIMATION

| Boxer | Actual time (Secs) | Estimated time (Secs) |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| A     | 10                 | 9                     |
| B     | 10                 | 6                     |
| C     | 10                 | 7                     |
| D     | 10                 | 9.5                   |
| E     | 10                 | 12                    |
| F     | 10                 | 8                     |
| G     | 10                 | 14                    |



**00:10**

# ANXIETY

- Anxiety is a bodily response to a perceived threat or danger.
- Anxiety produces feelings of apprehension and tension.

Two components have been recognized:

**cognitive anxiety**, characterized by distressing thought processes,

**somatic anxiety** expressed in physical reactions, such as butterflies and sweating.

# PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

**A state of an intense anxiety that happens prior and/or during a performance.**

- ⦿ Responses specific to evaluative situations
- ⦿ Primary “threat” is the possibility of failure & loss of esteem
- ⦿ Occurs in the presence of a difficult, threatening or challenging situation



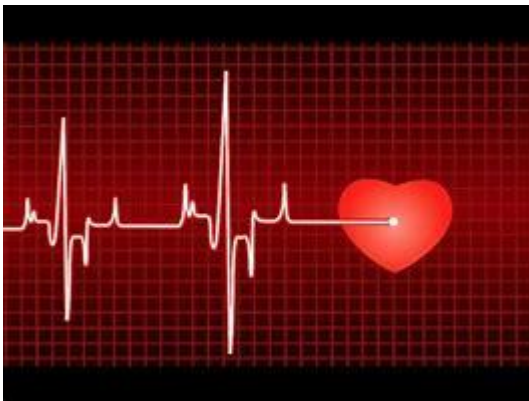
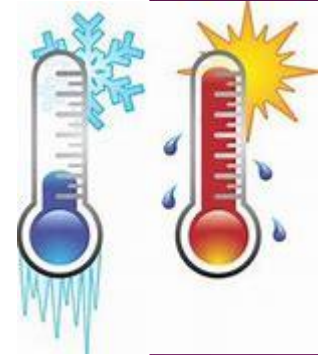
# ANXIOUS ATHLETES REPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- “I play so well in practice but mess up in competition.”*
- “I’m so nervous in games that I get sick to my stomach.”*
- “I become so anxious in competitions that I can’t concentrate.”*
- “I always fall apart when the game is critical.”*
- “I get so nervous that I don’t even enjoy my sport anymore.”*

# SYMPTOMS OF PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

## ◉ Physical -

headaches, nausea or diarrhea, extreme body temperature changes, excessive sweating, shortness or breath, light-headedness or fainting, rapid heart beat, and/or dry mouth.



# SYMPTOMS OF PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

## ◉ Emotional -

excessive feelings of fear, disappointment, anger, depression, uncontrollable crying or laughing, feelings of helplessness.



# SYMPTOMS OF PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- ◉ *Behavioral* - fidgeting, pacing, substance abuse, avoidance
- Cognitive - racing thoughts, 'going blank', difficulty concentrating, negative self-talk, feelings of dread, comparing yourself to others, difficulty organizing your thoughts.

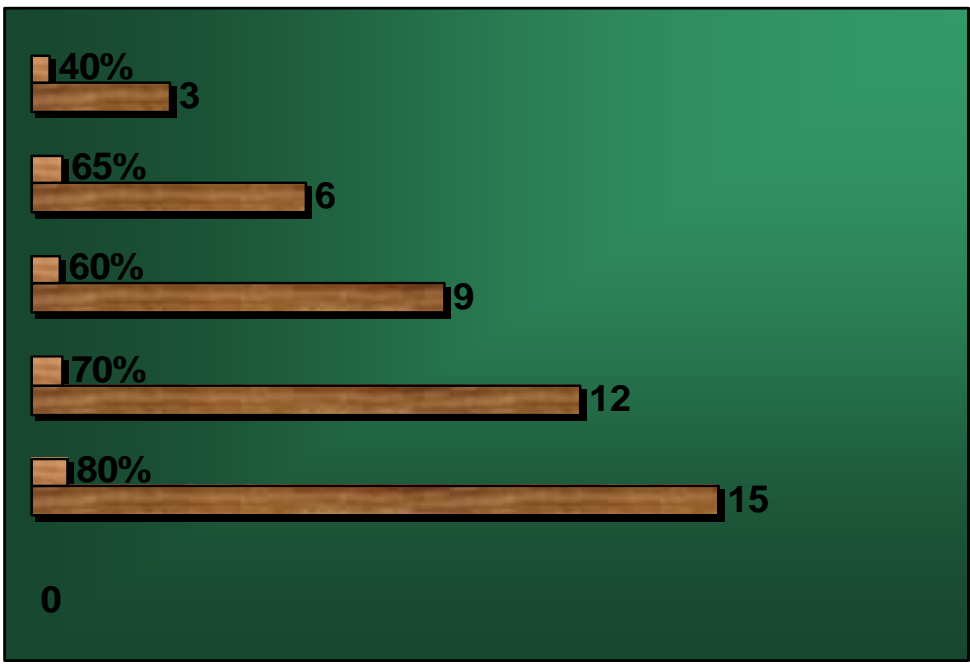


# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Relaxation training
- Behavioural techniques
- Cognitive restructuring
- Imagery



Self - ratings - regarding the effectiveness of imagery sessions are provided below -



Could relax effectively

Could visualise, but experienced technical problems

Could perform in the presence of audience with confidence

# TIPS TO OVERCOME PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- **Give up the belief that you have to be perfect.** (Anxiety over mistakes only makes mistakes more likely. )
- **Visualize the outcome you want.** ( If you anticipate success, you are more likely to get it)
- **Prepare Positively.**
- **Adore your audience.** ( If you want your audiences to like you, you have to like them first. )
- **Put the past behind you---at least the unpleasant parts**

# TIPS TO OVERCOME PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- ◉ **Get some rest**
- ◉ **Avoid mood-altering substances (coffee or alcohol, smoking cigarettes or popping a tranquilizer )**
- ◉ **Look your best (Feel confident)**
- ◉ **Remember to breathe**
- ◉ **Focus on friendly faces**



# LEARNING OUTCOME

- Arousal is the level of physical and psychological activation, on a scale from deep sleep to intense excitement.
- Moderating arousal levels can help to control stress and anxiety.
- Arousal levels affect performance negatively and positively.
- We need to identify Ideal performance state or ‘the zone’ for each Boxer.
- Arousal affects performance due to:
  - Muscle tension and coordination difficulties with excessive arousal. 400m runners record faster times when told to run at 95% than they do when told to run at 110%.
  - Attention and concentration narrows with increased arousal.