



Mental Skills in Triathlon Racing

By Sarah Haskins
2008 Olympian
45 Professional wins
2011 Pan American Gold Medal
2008 ITU World Championship Silver Medal

How can visualization help you on race day?



Racing 90% mental...

- Visualization can be practiced anytime, anywhere and help you get the most out of yourself physically and mentally on race day
- Use specific sections on course to focus on mental imagery and visualization during training sessions prior to race day.
- Have specific performance goals, but focus on the process of how you are going to achieve those goals

PRACTICING VISUALIZATION

- Pre or post workout, take 5 to 10 min closing eyes and focus on senses you feel while racing (sounds you will hear, how your body will feel, smells..., sights, etc)
- Holding poses in yoga and pilates also help to train your brain for mental training and visualization techniques
- Keep pre-race self talk positive and process oriented. If your mind shifts to negative words, simply start over and practice using your personal mantras:
- (Strong, relaxed, ready)

Mental Imagery for Relaxation



- Pre-race, keep nerves in check for race day and night before race using imagery techniques
- Focus on breathing techniques to calm body and mind
- Pre-race find a quiet spot or use breathing technique just before swim start
- Useful post race as well for enhanced recovery

Pre-race

- Gear/nutrition outlined night before
- Study course layout including transition (if possible day before race or race morning, walk through full transition)
- Use visualization techniques pre-race focusing on swim start, swim exit, transition, technical portions of the bike, etc.

Real Time Racing...

A dark silhouette of a person running, positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the title and the list.

- Racing pushes body to physical and mental limits and may pose inclination for negative self talk; however, having practiced mental imagery will help you to STAY in positive frame of mind
- If something does not go as planned, immediately focus on what you can do, don't dwell on negative
- Repeat mantra's
- Focus on process goals during (Bike: high cadence, drink every 10 min, keep head in aero position or Run: relax arms, run tall, smile)

Achievement

- This is when you have met your goal!
- Celebrate!!
- What did you learn?
- Now it is time to set a new goal!

