



LEVEL 1

1. The athlete demonstrates “industry”, or a sense of becoming capable of performing increasingly complex tasks outlined in the other three dimensions (coachable)
2. The athlete understands and behaviorally demonstrates that others can teach them new things (willing to learn new things and new perspectives-coachable)
3. The athlete behaviorally demonstrates and verbally communicates that participation in this activity is worth their time and effort (fun).
4. The athlete behaviorally demonstrates “initiative and competency” – becomes more comfortable with the pool/swimming environment and culture
5. The athlete behaviorally demonstrates both a “me and a we” (egocentrism) in their learning and participation.

LEVEL 2

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Understands and can demonstrate the difference between tense and relaxed muscles.
2. Can identify past situations where both, tense and relaxed muscles, have been present.
3. Can describe the relationship between nervousness and performance.
4. Can describe the mind–body connection (negative thoughts lead to tight muscles lead to poor performance).

SELF-IMAGE

Understands the role of failure and the importance of learning from one’s mistakes; understands that this is essential to becoming a champion.

SELF-TALK

Has a general understanding of the effect that negative self-talk plays on performance (understands the concept of GIGO—garbage in, garbage out).

MENTAL TRAINING

Understands that an important part of training in swimming involves the mental dimension.

CONCENTRATION

1. Possesses a basic understanding of the concept of concentration.
2. Knows the difference between focusing on what’s important and what’s not.
3. Has an understanding of what to focus on and what to block out both in practice and in meets.
4. Is aware when focus leaves target and knows how to bring focus back (how to concentrate).

LEVEL 3

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Understands the relationship between relaxation and performance.
2. Knows the three levels of nervousness (too little, just right, too much).
3. Can perform diaphragmatic (belly) breathing as relaxation technique.
4. Understands that stress comes from negative self-talk and faulty focus of concentration.
5. Understands the concept of “UC’s,” or uncontrollables, as a major source of stress.

SELF-IMAGE

1. Is able to accept criticism from the coach.
2. Understands that criticism is a critique of skills not a critique of an individual.

SELF-TALK

1. Understands the benefits of and uses positive self-talk and affirmations.
2. Closely monitors negative self-talk.

CONCENTRATION

Understands the importance of concentration in practice and meets and can regularly recognize a faulty focus and bring self back to a proper focus.

GOAL SETTING

1. Understands the value of setting process and outcome goals for both practice and meets
2. Athlete knows best times for practice and meets
3. Athlete sets and writes process and outcome goals

LEVEL 4

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Can combine self-talk and slow breathing for peak performance management.
2. Has a clear awareness of personal stressors (UCs).
3. Is capable of performing progressive muscle relaxation.
4. Recognizes that anxiety can negatively affect mind and body.



LEVEL 4 (CONTINUED)

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

5. Knows techniques to control mind (positive self-talk and imagery) and body (deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation).

SELF-TALK

Knows at least one technique for handling negative self-talk.

IMAGERY AND VISUALIZATION

1. Understands the importance of imagery in enhancing performance.
2. Knows the principles behind effective imagery practice.
3. Can perform basic visualization skills.

CONCENTRATION

Can quickly return concentration focus in practice and in meets from uncontrollables to appropriate focus.

GOAL SETTING

Athlete regularly visits, and if need be, re-evaluates goals

LEVEL 5

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Demonstrates an understanding of the individual zones of optimal functioning (IZOF) concept.
2. Can identify their own optimal zone of performance both in practice and competition.

3. Understands personal signs of under- or over excitement (“not enough” or “too much”).
4. Skilled in two or more techniques to control excitement/nervousness.

SELF-IMAGE

1. Realizes that positive comments help reduce stress, build confidence, and can increase the enjoyment of competition and practice.
2. Understands the damage of negative self-talk to self-esteem, performance, and the enjoyment of the sport.

IMAGERY AND VISUALIZATION

Can visualize a race from start to finish. Can control the image so vision matches actual performance.

CONCENTRATION

1. Develops a pre-race ritual or routine.
2. Develops race focal points for concentration.

GOAL SETTING

1. Has developed a long-range goal within the sport.
2. Develops short-term and intermediate goals that ultimately tie into long-range goals.

MEET AND PRACTICE BEHAVIOR

1. Understands the effect of posture and actions on emotions.
2. Uses the “Act as if” strategy as a fallback position.

LEVEL 6

PEAK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. Demonstrates an understanding of factors that excite and relax the athlete.
2. Utilizes relaxation techniques under meet duress to perform optimally.
3. Maintains optimum relaxation level (“good nervousness”), regardless of uncontrollables.
4. Learns to utilize imagery skills to manage competitive stress.

SELF-IMAGE AND GOAL SETTING

Can use ultimate goal in sport to maintain intensity and work ethic in practice.

SELF-TALK

Able to positively reframe uncontrollables and adversity to enhance confidence.

IMAGERY AND VISUALIZATION

Through instruction is able to visualize a race from start to finish in complete detail (seeing, hearing, and feeling).

CONCENTRATION

1. Demonstrates an ability to rebound quickly from mistakes and failures.
2. Able to successfully use pre-race routines and control focal points to maintain concentration during a race.
3. Consistently swims “in own lane” in practice and meets.