

MENTAL PREPARATION
ATTENTIONAL FOCUS

PITCHER EXERCISE

This exercise is designed specifically for pitchers to practice the skill of shifting their mental focus in appropriate ways to meet changing game situations.

For each situation listed below, indicate the appropriate focus of attention a pitcher should have, and what they should be focussed on, in order to maximize their performance.

Use the following abbreviations to indicate the focus;

- a) Narrow Internal N/I
- b) Narrow External N/E
- c) Broad Internal B/I
- d) Broad External B/E

GAME SITUATION	FOCUS	SUBJECT OF FOCUS
1. Standing in circle with ball		
2. Preparing to approach rubber		
3. Stepping onto rubber		
4. Taking signal from catcher		
5. Accepting/rejecting signal		
6. Moving to pitching position		
7. In the pause		
8. Starting the pitch		
9. Delivering		
10. Reacting to the swing		
11. Moving to cover the play		
12. Analysing result of pitch		
13. Reviewing pitching pattern		
14. Considering next pitch		

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SHIFTING FOCUS ON DEFENCE

Review the listed activity sequence normally used when playing defence in softball. For each one, describe the appropriate focus of attention for the player, and identify exactly what he should be focussed on for maximum performance.

GAME SITUATION	FOCUS	SUBJECT OF FOCUS
1. Getting ready for the pitch.		
2. Reviewing the situation.		
3. Pitcher on the rubber.		
4. Pitcher winds-up to throw.		
5. Watching the pitch.		
6. Seeing the ball off the bat		
7. Ball goes to another player		
8. Tracking the ball to you.		
9. Fielding the ball.		
10. Preparing to make the throw		
11. Throwing the ball to...		
12. Moving into back-up play.		

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SHIFTING FOCUS AT BAT

Review each of the following steps in a typical "at bat". For each one, identify the appropriate focus of attention, and describe what you should focus on for maximum results. Use these abbreviations: N/I - Narrow Internal

N/E - Narrow External

B/I - Broad Internal

B/E - Broad External

AT BAT PROCEDURE	FOCUS	SUBJECT OF FOCUS
<u>ON THE BENCH</u>		
1. Watching the defence.		
2. Studying pitcher.		
3. Picking up catcher signals.		
4. Studying pitching patterns.		
<u>ON DECK</u>		
5. Analyzing game situation.		
6. Getting relaxed.		
7. Self talk - mechanics.		
8. Timing the pitches.		
9. Visualizing your swing.		
10. Gaining control (centering)		
<u>IN THE BATTER'S BOX</u>		
11. Checking the situation		
12. Breathing Control		
13. Automatic Pilot		
14. Soft centering on pitcher.		
15. Fine center - release point		
16. Tracking the ball.		
<u>AFTER THE PITCH</u>		
17. Clearing negative thoughts		
18. Re-evaluate the situation		
19. Visualizing adjustments		
20. Breathing control (center)		
21. Re-focussing - soft center		

REHEARSE THIS SEQUENCE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. TRY TO SEE EACH SITUATION AND CONCENTRATE ON SHIFTING YOUR FOCUS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR PERFORMANCE EVERY AT BAT

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ATTENTION FOCUS, SEE, "GOLD MEDAL HITTING - PART 3", OR, "GOLD MEDAL PERFORMANCE". BOTH AVAILABLE FROM GOLD MEDAL SOFTBALL IN HARD COPY OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT.