

# Mind Tactics (MT)



*“Harness the power of  
your mind”*

**Warning:**

For maximum effect, these strategies are best used in combination with Controlled Response, Performance-Based Nutrition, Recharge, Primal Fitness, Purpose, and the Code Modules.



# Mind Tactics (MT) Module

## Introduction:

Athletes and warriors are able to tap into the hidden power of the human mind. The human mind is the control center of the human body and the link to the Controlled Response (CR) network; it redirects key resources for optimal performance and is the driving force for pain tolerance. This Mind Tactics module teaches you how to generalize your pre-existing skill sets to improve control over physical resources related to performance.

## Examining the Mechanism:

Improved performance comes as a result of knowing how and being able to shift control of your attention and concentration. For instance, when driving a ball an athlete must shift his/her attention outwardly and take in a broad range of information; relate information to past performance experiences; align physical/mental attributes to match past performances; and then lock-in on target and swing. Let's take the same example and apply it to a warrior in combat.

**Broad (external) focus:** You scan the area and take in all information.



**Broad (internal) focus:** Recall past successful training/events where you performed well.

**Narrow (internal) focus:** You select a posture/position and align your body (e.g., muscle, form, breathing, etc.) to the imprinted memory acquired in training.

**Narrow (external) focus:** Finally, you focus back onto your target and prepare to fire.

**Note:** What is very important is the feedback loop – i.e. our ability to interpret physical cues from your body to align with previous imprints. This is in essence why you practice/train – so that your body can quickly go through the most optimal response in combat.

## Strategies:

### *Strategy #1: External/Internal Selection*

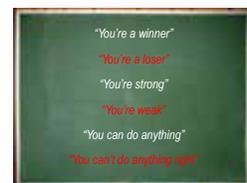
#### *External Focus “You’ve done it before”*

You experience the world through your five senses—senses that can be modified and regulated to enhance your performance. The key is to separate important information from distracters.



#### *Internal Filters*

Everyone is born with a “clean slate,” not only for internal dialogue, but also for all other internal filters. Over time and with life experiences, we fill the slate with things to help us to improve or degrade our performance. Being aware of these filters and choosing which filters you should pay attention to will determine your success and failure.



## Strategy #2: Filters

### Dialogue Filters

Internal Dialogue can assist in boosting performance of any task. Hundreds of thoughts stream through the head in a blink of an eye. Being aware of this process and selecting the right dialogue for the task at hand is the key. (NOTE: More information about Internal Dialogue and Autogenic Training can be found in the OSOK Student Handbook.)



Avoid negligent discharges (selecting wrong dialogue to use or unable to modulate dialogue). Note: Can be applied to Image and Biofeedback Filters. (NOTE: More information about Visualization can be found in the OSOK Student Handbook.)

### Image Filters

Similar to Dialogue Filters, the Images observed in the mind are also accumulated through time and experience. Selecting the appropriate image can assist in boosting performance in any activity.



### Biofeedback Filters

The accurate interpretation of physical cues is very important to reaching optimal levels of performance. Professional athletes have mastered this ability, which enables them to excel at their profession. Misinterpretation of responses can often lead to a decline in performance and ultimately a failure to achieve a desired goal. Note: Controlled Response Recalibration can assist with improving Biofeedback Filter controls (see CR Module).

### Strategy #3: Mind Influence on Body (Example)

To further elaborate on the idea that our body goes through physical changes in response to the images in our mind, try this exercise...

Lean back in your chair and close your eyes. Take a deep breath in, and on your exhale, allow any thoughts to leave your mind. In your mind, imagine yourself returning from the grocery store with a bag of lemons. You put the bag on the counter and pull out a lemon. You place it on the cutting board, and using a knife, you slice the lemon in half. Picking up one half of the lemon you look down and take notice of its color and fine details. Finally, you place it in your mouth and bite into it...



Take another deep breath and gently open your eyes. Did your mouth water? This is just one example of the power your mind has over your body. Highly skilled professional athletes learn to deliberately leverage this mind-body relationship by seeing themselves achieving goals and being successful. You can too.

### Additional Strategies:

⇒ **Controlled Response:** Your mind is the control center that influences your physical resources, but this may be as a result of a feedback loop in which your mind first interprets physical cues (biofeedback). As you may have already noticed—like the rest of OSOK—the CR and MT modules are interdependent and cannot be viewed separately. Optimal performance comes as a result of refining the relationship between the two (see Controlled Response Module).



⇒ **Recharge:** With each day of lost sleep, your performance—including mental functioning—will decline. Studies have shown that loss of sleep is equivalent to being intoxicated from alcohol use. Your ability to make decisions and self-assess will become compromised (see Recharge Module).



⇒ **Performance-Based Nutrition:** Eating regularly throughout the day (healthy meal plans) can help maintain blood-sugar levels and improve mental capacity. In addition, certain foods have been shown to improve focus and concentration (see Performance-Based Nutrition Module).



# Internal Dialogue

*“Create your own reality...optimize your performance”*

## Remember ABC:

ACTIVATING EVENTS leads to BELIEFS or thoughts, which produces CONSEQUENCES. YOU have the power to create your own reality. First, you must be aware of your thoughts in order to change them.

- **Common distortions that hinder Peak Performance:**
- **All-or-Nothing Thinking** – Telling yourself if you do not succeed at something you are a total failure
- **Jumping to Conclusions** – Assuming something negative about yourself when you don't have all the facts
- **Over-Generalization** – Assuming one negative event reflects your entire life
- **Catastrophizing** – Thinking that the worst possible outcome is the only outcome possible
- **Personalization** – Making events/activities personal to you

## Tactics:

- ✓ **Awareness** – Recognize self-defeating thoughts. The only way to fix self-defeating thoughts is to be aware of when you are having them.
- ✓ **Thought Stopping** – Use a trigger to stop self-defeating thoughts. The trigger can be a verbal word like “stop!!” or it can be a physical action like clapping your hands.
- ✓ **Changing Negative Thoughts to Positive** – Once you stop the negative thoughts, switch it to positive ones. Instead of “I can't bench 100lbs, so I am a total loser,” try “I've gotten stronger and I'm able to bench more now than when I started.”
- ✓ **Countering** – Sometimes, simply changing the words from negative to positive does not necessarily change the belief. Often, people will still believe that they can't do certain things even though they're saying they can. In this case, try arguing against the negative thought by going through evidence that is counter to it. “Am I really going to fail the PT test? I've worked hard trying to improve my overall fitness. There was a time when I was in better shape because I worked at it. I've worked at it now, so there's no reason that I should fail.”
- ✓ **Reframing** – Involves creating another way of looking at things. Instead of “I'm nervous that I will not be able to make it up the mountain on mission today,” try “I'm feeling excited and pumped to challenge my abilities.”

## Internal Dialogue

*“Create your own reality...optimize your performance”*

Type	Distortions		Challenge
All or Nothing Thinking	“I didn’t bench 200 lbs...I’m weak.”	“I didn’t do well on the mission...I’m a bad Warfighter.”	“I’ve performed well in the past. I just had a setback and I will perform better next time.”
Jumping to Conclusions	“I’m not going to be able to complete all the exercises in my workout today.”	“I’m not going to be able to make it up the mountain on tomorrow’s mission.”	“I’ve trained hard to condition myself, and I know that I have the motivation and endurance to perform well, so there’s no reason why I can’t make it up the mountain”
Over-Generalization	“I cannot run my two miles for my PT test in under 15 minutes; I’m a bad runner...”	“The last time I shot in the heat, I performed badly; I can’t shoot in the heat...”	“I’ve shot in worse conditions in the past; I was just having an off day...”
Catastrophizing	“I’m going to fail my PT test; I will never be able to do it, and I will be kicked out of the military.”	“I’m going to break my ankle on dismounted patrol today, and I won’t be able to do my job for the rest of the deployment.”	“I’ve gotten through patrols just fine before, and there’s no specific reason for today to be any different.”
Personalization	“The guys laughing at the gym...I think they were laughing at me.”	“My platoon leader is talking to my commander... they’re talking about me.”	“They were most likely talking about something else and not me.”
Mind Reading	“Why is he looking at me that way...he thinks I’m stupid.”	“He walked away from me when I was talking to him...he’s disrespecting me.”	“He walked away from me when I was talking to him...he must have not heard me with the trucks passing by.”

# Autogenic Training (AT)

*“Cued Response...CALM”*

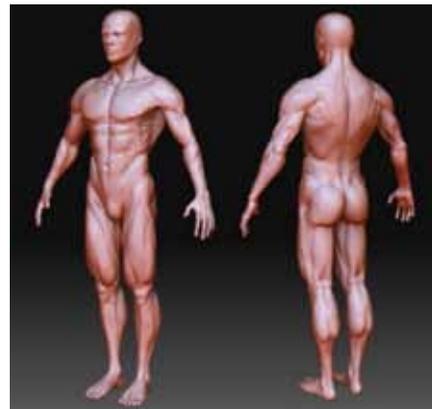
This is the second part of the recalibration process. The first part in the Controlled Response (CR) section focused on reconnecting your mind and body through the use of Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) training and conscious tense-and-release exercises paired with controlled (stomach) breathing. Autogenic Training (AT) follows the completion of CR training by pairing this relaxation response to a word such as “CALM.” Both training exercises allow you modulate from the Red Zone (“Overdrive”) to Green/White Zone (“Idle/Parked”). AT, however, allows you to accomplish this without the need for conscious contractions—rather, it uses your mind.

## **Instructions**

Step 1: Use PMR CD track daily for 10 sessions (number of sessions may vary depending on the length of time the connection between your mind and body has been severed—see Controlled Response module).

Step 2: Use AT CD track (mind/body connection must be first established using PMR training—see Step 1).

**Important:** Must be used with Controlled Breathing strategies (stomach breathing—see Controlled Response module)



## Autogenic Training and Cued Response

I would like for you to settle back and let go for the next few minutes. Gently close your eyes and take a deep breath in, filling your lungs and stomach with air. Slowly exhale...Again, take a deep breath in...and slowly exhale...

Now, whenever you exhale, allow yourself to drift down into a deeper state of relaxation. Just let yourself go with each exhale...Your whole body may begin to feel heavy and warm, but very comfortable...Continue to let go and feel your whole body begin to sink deeper and deeper into your chair

Allow any thoughts that come into your mind to go freely without judging them. Enjoy the quiet and slowly return your attention to your breathing, your mind becoming calmer with each breath.

Now that we have examined various parts of the body, I want you to check and see how aware you have become concerning your muscle activation and relaxation. This will be the beginning of a new type of exercise using your mind rather than the forced tension of your body. I want you to visualize the various parts of your body as I call them out. Think about the muscles that exist in these areas and assess whether or not the muscles are activated. If they are then mentally instruct them to relax. If you continue to feel any tension, I want you to tense and relax that part of your body again. Continue to tense and relax them until they relax.

We will then pair this relaxed state with a word (e.g., CALM) or song. With repetition, the chosen word or song itself will invoke the desired relaxed state (Cued Response).

Take a deep breath, inhale so that the air flows into your lungs and feels as though it is filling up your abdominal region. Focus your attention completely on your breathing. Imagine your breathing is automatic, like ocean waves rolling in and out. Say to yourself, my breathing is slow and smooth, as you continue to imagine ocean waves, rolling in and out.

And now, without moving any part of your body, I want you to think the following thought:

My right arm is heavy and relaxed...(repeat)  
I can feel the warmth in my right arm...(repeat)  
The fingertips of my right hand are getting tingly and warm...(repeat)

My left arm is heavy and relaxed...(repeat)  
I can feel the warmth throughout my left arm...(repeat)  
The fingertips of my left hand feel tingly and warm...(repeat)

Both of my arms feel heavy and relaxed...(repeat)

Lets move on to your neck and shoulders.

My neck and shoulders are heavy and relaxed...(repeat)  
I can feel the relaxation spreading down through my neck and shoulder...(repeat)  
My neck and shoulders are heavy and relaxed...(repeat)

Let's move on to the right leg.

My right leg is heavy and relaxed...(repeat)  
I can feel the warmth in my right leg...(repeat)  
I can feel a warm and tingling sensation in the toes of my right foot...(repeat)

My left leg feels heavy and relaxed...(repeat)  
I can feel the warmth in my left leg...(repeat)  
I can feel a warm and tingling sensation through the toes of my left foot...(repeat)

Both of my legs feel heavy and relaxed...very deeply relaxed...(repeat)

I am at peace...(repeat)  
Feel the peace...feel the tranquility throughout your body...

Now in your mind I would like you to associate the word "CALM" with the feelings you are now experiencing...

Just sit back and repeat the word "CALM" each time you exhale...let all the thoughts and worries leave your mind, and if you find yourself thinking about something else, which is normal, just bring your mind to the word "CALM."

Now, as your body is completely relaxed, repeat the word "CALM."

For a few moments I will say it out loud...then I will stop...but I would like you to repeat it to yourself with each exhale...and I would like you to associate it with the feelings of deep relaxation.

"CALM...CALM...CALM."

My mind is CALM, my body is deeply relaxed...

Continue to repeat the word "CALM" over and over again so that, in the future, this word will help you to achieve the relaxed state that you are in...

You can hear other things, but in the back of your mind the word "CALM" continues to repeat itself...

As we begin to end our session, take a deep breath and slowly exhale...and now gently open your eyes, becoming aware of your surroundings...and then slowly stretch your body, feeling revitalized and refreshed.

# Customize Your Own Scripts

(Sample Starter Script)

I would like for you to settle back and let go for the next few minutes.  
Gently close your eyes and take a deep breath in filling your lungs and stomach with air  
Slowly exhale...  
Again take a deep breath in... and slowly exhale...  
Now, whenever you exhale, allow yourself to drift down into a deeper state of relaxation.  
Just let yourself go with each exhale...  
Your whole body may begins to feel heavy and warm, but very comfortable...  
Continue to let go and feel your whole body begin to sink, deeper and deeper into your chair

Allow any thoughts that come to your mind to go freely without judging them.  
Enjoy the quiet and slowly return your attention to your breathing.  
Your mind becoming calmer with each breath.

As you continue breathing, I'd like you to picture in your mind being at the top of a staircase...  
As I count from 10 to one, I'd like you to take a step down that staircase...one step for each number...the  
smaller the number, the farther down the staircase...the farther down the staircase, the more comfortable you  
will feel, allowing yourself to drift downward into a deeper state of relaxation...

**TEN**...your body and mind are becoming more relaxed and quieter with each step...  
**NINE**...all sounds become muffled by the sound of your breath...  
**EIGHT**...your body continues to drift deeper and deeper into a state of relaxation...  
**SEVEN**...the feeling of relaxation is spreading down your shoulders...arms...and back...  
**SIX**...your body is feeling increasingly heavy and more and more comfortable...  
**FIVE**...the pleasant relaxation is spreading through your entire body...  
**FOUR**...your body is sinking deeper into the chair, feeling comfortable and warm...  
**THREE**...your body is heavy...and at rest...  
**TWO**...every muscle relaxed...your mind quiet...  
**ONE**...feeling calm and relaxed...

Now I'm going to count from one to 10...feel yourself slowly and comfortably going back up the steps, one  
step for each number I count...more alert as you go back up each step...**ONE**...**TWO**...that's right...feel  
yourself going back up the steps...**THREE**...**FOUR**...**FIVE**...becoming more aware of your surroundings...  
**SIX**...**SEVEN**...**EIGHT**...that's right...feel yourself becoming more and more alert...**NINE**...opening your  
eyes...and...**TEN**...wide awake, feeling alert, relaxed, refreshed.

## **Visualization**

*“Unleash the power of your mind”*

*The Mental Athlete (2003)* by Kay Porter

Visualization is a key factor for good performance. If you see yourself as performing badly or in a mediocre fashion, then you will perform as such. If you see yourself as performing well, then you will perform well in reality.

Visualizing creates neural patterns in the brain. These patterns are physically engraved in the brain and help to ensure that performance is performed in this manner in the future.

### **Creating your own Visualization**

- Establish a goal and positive affirmations (make sure to write both down).
- See yourself as being successful. Use all of your senses to recognize what it feels, sounds, and looks like.
- Pay attention to those around you, what they are saying/doing – anything that might be important for your success.
- Think of key words such as “Strong,” “Competition,” “Relaxed,” or “Centered” to say to yourself in times of self-doubt.
- After you are finished with your visualization, bring your focus back to your body and your breathing.
- Visualization is not recommended for the day of “competition” or combat. Instead focus on clearing your mind and your Controlled Response system.
- Go through your visualization daily for at least 20 undisturbed minutes (e.g., right before bed). Repetition is important to develop a good visualization technique and enhance your performance.

### **Writing your Visualization**

- Beginning—Focus on your main goal and the outcome you wish to achieve. Make sure to include your preparation as well into this phase.
- Middle—Event itself (Every move you make, strategies, and finish)
- Final—Things that happen after the actual event (e.g., victory, your reaction, etc.)

On the next page is a sample visualization exercise. You can use this as a template to help you develop and create your own. Make sure to make your visualization personal to you. Do not be afraid to be creative and add elements that will make the visualization effective and work for you.

## Visualization Example

Let go of your body and time completely, and begin to think of a time in your life when you performed perfectly. See yourself at that time...notice what you look like, what you are wearing, who is with you, what sounds are around you, where you are...feel the environment and the energy. Begin to see yourself doing whatever it was you did when you knew you were performing at your best...when everything worked perfectly...when you were in complete control and at your peak. Watch yourself and feel that feeling...connect with all the feelings you experienced as you achieved at your highest level ...perfectly ...competently ...exactly the way you wanted to...What did it feel like...sound like...look like? Let it all come back to you...let it in...know it again...the joy...the power...the pride and confidence...the rush of knowing it was perfect...let it become part of you...part of your spirit...part of your being. Feel fully connected to it. Now, while completely involved with this absolute knowing, give yourself a word or short phrase that brings all these feelings, pictures, and sounds sharply into focus...a word or phrase that completely connects you with that time and those feelings when you knew that you knew...that you were perfect and right on...say the word or words to yourself several times ...slowly...and allow yourself to experience your sense of power...feel it in your whole body. Think of your goal...what you want to achieve...the importance it has for you. Begin to see yourself preparing to achieve this goal. Where are you and what do you look like? Are there other people there to assist you? What are they saying? Begin to go for your goal...see and feel yourself starting...moving toward your personal fulfillment. Give yourself permission to have it just the way you want it to be...see it perfectly as you move closer and closer to your goal...feel that excitement and rush that comes with doing something well, flawlessly, and with control...connect with your excellence as you reach and attain this important goal...let yourself have it, feel it, see it, know it completely...say your special word or phrase...know those feelings...that power...see your peak performance...exactly the way you want it to be. Know that anytime you need it you can call up these feelings of perfection, competence, and power simply by saying your word or phrase...simply by reconnecting with your inner knowledge and by seeing yourself at the moment of your peak performance. Experience yourself doing whatever you want to do now that you have reached your goal...be aware of how it feels to achieve...listen to the congratulations and hear the response of the world around you...allow yourself to experience the full impact of the outcome...the result of achieving your goal...let it in...relish it...touch it. Begin to let go of the image now...see it floating away from you...let it go...bring your attention back to your breathing...know that you have succeeded...you have done it perfectly, just the way you wanted to...and breathe in deeply...and exhale slowly...releasing tension. Slowly reconnect with the chair you are sitting in...move your toes...come back to your body...move your hands and fingers...and, quietly and gently open your eyes.