

A practical starting point for building focus, confidence, and resilience — even under pressure.

5 Essentials to Start Training Your Mind for Sport

Gideon Hanekom



Table Of Contents

Welcome — You're Right Where You Need to Be	4
The Breathing Anchor	6
Clarify Your "Why"	8
Reframe Mistakes	10
10-Second Reset Routine	12
5-Day Mental Skill Tracker	14
What's Next: Build Your Personalized Performance Plan (PPP)	16

02

Welcome – You're Right Where You Need to Be



If you're here, that means your score placed you in the Mentally Solid category — that's not a bad thing.

In fact, it means you've got huge potential just waiting to be developed.

Right now, however, your physical game might be ahead of your mental game.

Maybe pressure gets to you and you get anxious quickly, or mistakes knock your confidence, or you struggle to stay focused when it counts...

If that is the case, I want you to know that that's normal. And you're not alone.

The great news?

These are **mental skills** you can learn and build (over time).

And *this* guide is your first step.

Over the next few pages, I'll walk you through 5 simple but powerful tools that top athletes use to build mental strength.

Each one is practical, repeatable, and designed to help you stay in control — whether you're training, competing, or (just) bouncing back from a rough day.

I will briefly say: 1) what it is; 2) what action you must take; and **3)** why taking that action works.

Again, this is only briefly, as I don't want to overwhelm you.

So, let's get into it.

03

The Breathing Anchor



› Calm mind. Clear action.

What it is:

Your emotions can either fuel your performance or sabotage it.

The Breathing Anchor, though, is a fast, reliable way to reset your nervous system — so you can respond (well), not react (poorly), in real time on-field.

Action:

Try this quick reset before a game, after a mistake, or any time you feel overwhelmed.

Box Breathing (4–4–6):

- › Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
- › Hold for 4 seconds.
- › Exhale slowly through the mouth for 6 seconds.
- › Repeat ×3 times.
- › To end, say something like: *"Let's go."*



Why it works:

This exercise activates your parasympathetic nervous system — the *"rest and reset"* part of your body — helping you stay calm, focused, and in control.

It's often used by elite athletes, soldiers, and high performers worldwide...because it works.

04

Clarify Your “Why”



> Purpose fuels persistence.

What it is:

When training gets tough — and it will — your WHY will often keep you going.

WHY = purpose.

Clarifying your *core motivations* (i.e., *WHY* you do something) typically helps you build grit, focus, and discipline over time.

Action:

Answer these prompts in a notebook or journal (review often):

- *Why does this sport matter to me?*
- *What kind of athlete do I want to become (be)?*
- *When I'm at my best, what do people notice about me (imagine)?*

Why it works:

When your actions are connected to a bigger purpose, your discipline to show up stops relying on motivation.

In other words, having to talk yourself into going somewhere or doing something, like training, becomes easy.

That's how elite consistency (and performance) is built — from within.

And it all starts with a personal, clear, and important *WHY*.





05

Reframe Mistakes





➤ Mistakes aren't failures — they're feedback.

What it is:

This simple mindset shift (we call it "reframing" or "cognitive restructuring") can change your entire approach to performance.

Ultimately, mistakes don't define you — they *teach* you. Or, at least, they have the *potential* to teach you. IF, you're open to learning from them, that is. So,

Action:

After a mistake, use this 3-step reflection:

1. *What happened?*
2. *What can I learn from it?*
3. *What can I do differently next time?*

Why it works:

When you learn to analyze/review your setbacks calmly and constructively, you stay in control of your "story" (self-talk). That alone is a powerful shift that can hugely and rapidly reduce fear and increase your confidence.



06

10-Second Reset Routine



➤ **Reset quickly. Respond powerfully.**

What it is:

This is your personal system to mentally bounce back — from mistakes, distractions, or moments where things start falling apart.

Action:

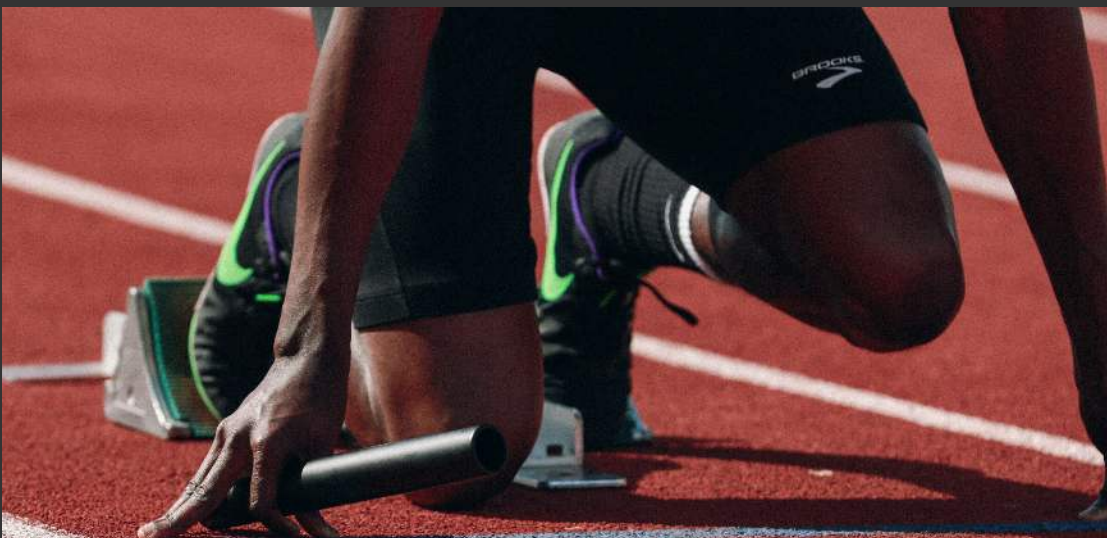
Use this mental reset between drills, after a bad play, or anytime you feel mentally “off.”

The Reset Routine:

1. Breathe — One deep inhale + slow exhale
2. Self-talk — “reset. I’m here now.”
3. Focus — Lock your eyes on a single object
4. Act — Return to the next task with purpose

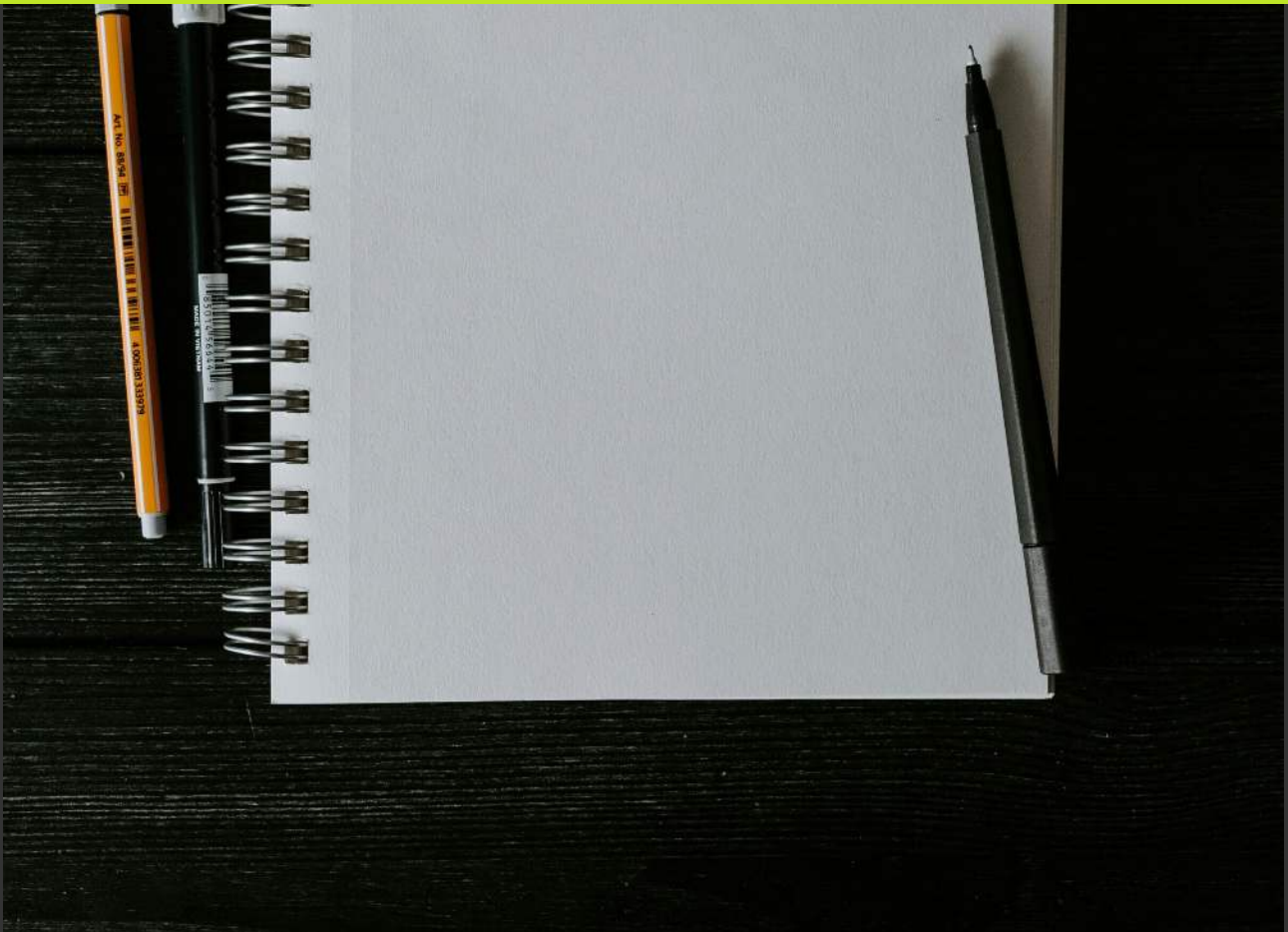
Why it works:

Elite athletes tend to reset fast or not dwell on a mistake too long. This routine gets you back into the present moment quickly — where everything is actually happening.



07

5-Day Mental Skill Tracker



› Consistency creates confidence.

What it is:

A simple way to practice these tools consistently over the next 5 days. You'll be amazed what happens with just a bit of focus (and review) each day.

Why it works:

Mental skills are like muscles. You don't build them by reading — you build them by doing. And a little bit of practice every day adds up fast.

So,



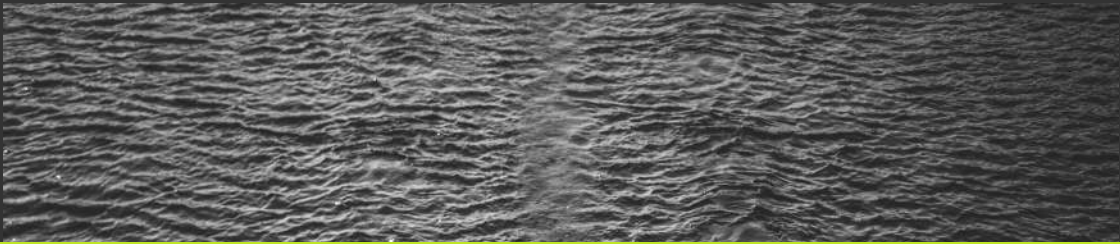
Action:

Over the next five days (whenever it works for you), use the following chart to track your use of the tools discussed in this PDF.

Make sure to track them each day and be honest. If you miss one, then do NOT tick the box.

Even this will provide us information about your current mindset, focus, and discipline, and how that might be affecting your sports performance.

Day	Breathing Anchor	Values Clarifier	Mistake Reframe	Reset Routine
Mon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



08

What's Next: Build Your Personalized Performance Plan (PPP)





Ok, if any of this was helpful, you're ready for the next level.

I often build Personalized Performance Plans (PPP) for athletes who want structure, clarity, and faster progress.

We look at your strengths, your mental patterns, and where you want to go — then create a plan that fits you, AND keep it up to date.

Now, you've already started, so let's keep the momentum going.

First,  download your free PPP plan  [HERE](#)

Listen, you've already done something most athletes never will —you've taken your mindset seriously and took a first step.

That matters. Hugely.

And it will show up — in your focus, your confidence, and your ability to come back stronger when it counts, IF you keep going.

You've got this. Keep going.