

And Relax...

Solutions focussed action planning, anchoring, timelines, future pacing, flow states, instant confidence, maps of the world, law of attraction, the impact of language.

These are just some of the tools that I've explored with one of my long-term clients. He has experienced some of the most powerful techniques out there, yet when I ask him what the most important thing he has learned during our time working together is, the answer is always the same. "You taught me how to breathe."

Now once I've got over the initial disappointment (my ego takes a little knock that it's not one of the complicated sessions I've created just for him!) I realise just how powerful this very simple technique is.

It has helped him to perform better in key games, to relax and enjoy the time he has with his family. It's helped him to become more focussed and consistent both technically and physically and he's improved his relationships with his teammates. Most importantly to him, this technique has helped him to sleep when before he would make do with a few hours even before big games.

Now any technique that helps you do all of those things and only takes a few minutes *has* to be worth learning!

In fact various research has pointed to the fact that breathing techniques can help reduce pain and blood pressure, increase fitness, is good for the heart, digestive system and of course the brain.

So here's the technique...

1. Breathe in for your own count of eight.
2. Hold the breath in for your own count of eight.
3. Breathe out for your own count of eight. Make sure you breathe all of the air out; you might need to 'push' it out.
4. Hold, with no air in for your own count of four.
5. Repeat steps 1 – 4 twice more.

That is the technique! It's very simple and very powerful.

The secret of course is to use the technique habitually as part of a mental rehearsal or other relaxation process. In fact, I recently saw a speaker suggest that the most powerful thing any player can do in the process of getting whatever they want is to visualise (or mentally rehearse) for five minutes every day. This breathing technique is the perfect way to start that process.

Other times it is useful to use this technique.

- ❑ Before a big game. It will relax you and help regulate your breathing to allow you to perform at your best.
- ❑ Whenever you feel that your getting stressed or over anxious.
- ❑ Before you train to help you focus and do it more effectively.
- ❑ To relax at the end of the day.
- ❑ To prepare for a difficult discussion or meeting at home or work
- ❑ Any other time it would be useful to be focussed and relaxed!

This week's call to action...

- Re-read this tip to bed-in how and why it's useful to learn the technique.
- Learn the technique!
- For the next five days do the 8-8-8-4 breathing at least once a day and before every key game, session or any business meetings you might have.