Chapter 4

Coping with Pressure & Adversity

Chapter Objectives

At the completion of this chapter, the reader will be able to do the following:

4.1 Define different types of anxiety and the role they play in attempting to reach fitness or sports performance goals.

4.2 Describe how to increase awareness of anxiety states.

4.3 Describe mental and physical relaxation techniques.

Author: Robert Weinberg, PhD

Setting the Scene

Jackie is an elite high school golfer and has been offered a full ride scholarship to the university of her choice. She is extremely relieved that she has received this scholarship because she would not have been able to attend college otherwise. However, she also has started to feel the increasing amount of pressure to do well in golf and has started to feel anxious when playing. She has had a hard time relaxing, which is a key component to her golf game, and is stressed out about her final exams. Jose, Jackie's golf coach is worried about the amount of pressure she is under and has noticed her becoming more distracted during golf practice.

- How might Jose help Jackie to become more aware of her anxiety?
- How can Jose and Jackie determine how effectively or ineffectively she is handling the pressure she is under?
- What types of anxiety reduction techniques could help Jackie during golf practice and tournaments?

Introduction

Performers in all domains will sooner or later have to cope with the pressures brought on by people, situations, or their own personality. One of the central characteristics of mentally tough performers is their ability to cope with the different pressures they have to face on the athletic field, in the gym, at home, or at the work place. They seem to possess a unique ability to interpret this pressure as something positive or to effectively cope with the pressure through the employment of different coping strategies. This is shown in the quote by multiple Olympic gold medalist Michael Johnson:

> *"If there is one thing that will really take you to another level of performance—to the plateau where your victories are measured in the blink of a millisecond—it might be the ability to embrace pressure, to understand it, to draw it in, to make it your own, and use it to your advantage... We've been trained to think of pressure as the enemy, the unfair burden that holds us down... Pressure is nothing more than the shadow of great opportunity."*[1]

Unfortunately, some performers appear to wilt under pressure. In sport it can result in poor performance—often called "choking"—but we can also "choke" in other areas such as a job interview, a presentation, and—probably more relevant to the fitness professional—not adhering to an exercise or meal plan. Performers in these situations often exhibit both cognitive issues (such as worrying about not performing well), as well as physiological reactions (such as excess sweating and increased heart rate) as this pressure turns into stress, or a stressful reaction. Finally, this usually results in poor performance or inappropriate behavior. For example, a junior tennis player describes his performance anxiety as follows:

"Sometimes when I go on the court to play an important match, I get so nervous that I actually have trouble breathing. I feel tension all over and when I try to run, my legs feel stiff and make me slow around the court. I start pushing my shots with little or no follow-through. It seems that I lose my tennis instincts and I become controlled by fear of failure. "

ANXIETY:
An emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension, and associated with activation or arousal of the body.

COGNITIVE ANXIETY:
The mental component of anxiety including nervousness, worry, and apprehension.

SOMATIC ANXIETY:
The physiological component of anxiety including muscle tension, increased breathing, accelerated heart rate, and sweating.

STRESS:
A substantial imbalance between the physical and/or psychological demands placed on a person and his or her response capabilities, under conditions where failure to meet that demand has important consequences.

A woman who was trying to stay on a fitness program to lose weight describes her feelings of anxiety related to exercise:

> *"When it was time for me to go workout, I would get anxious and tense. There was a part of me that wanted to go because I knew it was good for me but there was another part of me that didn't have the drive and energy to go and just thought it was a useless battle as I never really kept to a fitness program over time. So, I get more and more anxious as the time neared to go to and sometimes I almost felt paralyzed by this anxiety."*

The following text provides different relaxation and coping strategies to help individuals deal more effectively with stress.

4.1 Types of Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension, and is associated with activation or arousal of the body. In essence, anxiety has a mental component and a physical component. The mental component is known as **cognitive anxiety** because it focuses on one's thoughts, worry, and apprehension, whereas the physical component is known as **somatic anxiety** and focuses on physiological reactions such as muscle tension, increased breathing, accelerated heart rate, and sweating. It is important for fitness professionals to be knowledgeable about these two different types of reactions because clients can react very differently to different types of situations. Knowing the kind of anxiety reaction an individual has will help determine the kind of anxiety reduction strategy that person should employ.

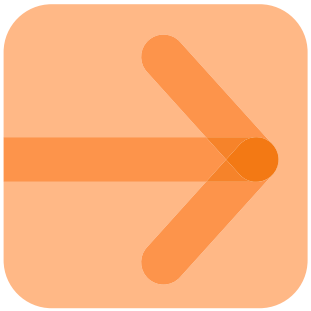
Another more common term that people use when they feel anxious is stress. **Stress** is defined as "a substantial imbalance between the physical and/or psychological demands placed on a person and his or her response capabilities, under conditions where failure to meet that demand has

Caution!

Make sure you are not "diagnosing" your clients with anxiety. Only a licensed professional trained in counseling, psychology, or psychiatry should be diagnosing.

important consequences."[2] People often say how stressed out they are. What they really mean is that the demands placed on them exceed their capabilities and therefore they become stressed out. An example is a person who tries to build up his respirtatory fitness and eat more healthily because a doctor recently said he is "a heart attack waiting to happen" due to his hectic lifestyle, which has led to physical inactivity and overeating (or at least eating the wrong kinds of foods). More specifically, his stressful work schedule leaves him exhausted at night sitting in front of the TV snacking on high-calorie foods. In addition, the individual has a hard time breaking old habits and his job requires travel where it is difficult to eat healthy and exercise regularly. In essence, the demands (exercise and eating healthy) outweigh his response capabilities because his present travel schedule and job make it difficult to follow the doctor's orders, resulting in him being stressed out.

When individuals perceive the demands of the situation as being greater than their capabilities, they become threatened and a stress response occurs. This stress response usually has both a physiological and psychological aspect (just like cognitive and somatic anxiety) and can include things like worry, negative talk, increased muscle tension, changes in concentration and attention, and autonomic nervous system reactions (increased heart rate and respiration rate, sweating). Finally, for most individuals, this stress response will eventually manifest itself in poorer performance, although as noted earlier, perhaps the performer could reinterpret these changes in a facilitative manner.



Caution!

If you find that your client is having trouble dealing with stress and anxiety to the point where you think they need additional help, refer them to a licensed professional.

4.2 Increasing Awareness of Anxiety States

The first step to controlling one's anxiety states is to be more aware of them during practices, exercise bouts, and competitions. This typically involves self-monitoring and recognizing how emotional states affect performance. Performers can usually identify certain feelings associated with top performance and other feelings associated with poor performance. In this case, performance could refer to athletic performance (playing one's best in a basketball game) or performance while exercising (swimming, cycling, or resistance training).

Fitness professionals can help increase clients' awareness of anxiety states by guiding them through the steps in **Box 4-1**.

Box 4-1

Steps to Increase Awareness of Anxiety
1. Think back to best performance or workout
2. Imagine the actual performance or workout as clearly as possible, focusing on what was felt and thought at the time
3. Take a minimum of 5 minutes to relive the experience
4. Complete the Checklist of Performance States (**Table 4-1**)
5. Think back to worst performance or workout
6. Imagine the actual performance or workout as clearly as possible, focusing on what was felt and thought at the time
7. Take a minimum of 5 minutes to relive the experience
8. Complete the Checklist of Performance States (**Table 4-1**)
9. Compare responses

Table 4-1

Checklist of Performance States

Felt extremely relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt extremely anxious
Felt extremely confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt extremely unconfident
Felt in complete control	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt no control at all
Muscles were relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Muscles were tense
Felt extremely energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt extremely fatigued
Self-talk was positive	1	2	3	4	5	6	Self-talk was negative
Felt extremely focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt extremely unfocused
Felt effortless	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt great effort
Had high energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Felt low energy

(Weinberg & Gould, 2011)

Most people find that their thoughts and feelings are distinctly different when comparing performing well and performing poorly. This is the beginning of awareness training (**Box 4-1**).

To better understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior/performance, clients can self-monitor by completing the checklist immediately after a workout or competition. Sometimes a client's psychological state will vary even during a given session. For example, if a client feels one way during the first half of a basketball game and another way during the second half, they can simply complete two checklists. Similarly, if a client felt one way during the beginning of a workout or a long run and another way toward the end, they can complete two checklists.

As noted earlier, recently the study of self-awareness has started to focus on whether these anxiety states are felt as facilitative (anxiety is perceived as helpful to performance) or debilitative (anxiety is perceived as hurting performance). Research has found that individuals who see their anxiety as facilitative are more likely to use both emotion- and problem-focused coping strategies (to be discussed later in the chapter), whereas individuals who view anxiety as debilitative are more limited in their use of coping strategies.[3] In terms of performance, elite athletes generally interpret their anxiety as more facilitative than non-elite athletes.[4] As Canadian Olympic basketball coach has noted, "it's not a case of getting rid of the butterflies, it's a question of having them fly in formation."[5]

Mentally tough individuals have learned to either appraise the potentially stressful situation in a way that is positive or facilitative, or they have developed effective coping strategies to deal with stressful situations.

Assessment of Handling Pressure/Stress

Table 4-2 provides a self-help test to help people determine how successfully they have excelled under pressure in the past.[6] This can help fitness professionals see where their clients are in terms of how effectively they cope with pressure.

Table 4-2

Excelling Under Pressure

Rate each question and think about how well you handled pressure over the last year in your performance area (e.g., sport, exercise).

0 – Almost Never

1 – Sometimes

2 – Almost Always

_____1. In general, I tend to perform as well or better when the pressure is high.

_____2. I perform my best when the pressure is high.

_____3. I seem to perform at my best when I need it the most.

_____4. Any anxiety I feel before important performances doesn't seem to hurt my ability to perform.

_____5. I am able to resist the pressure of others' expectations so their expectations don't hurt my performance.

_____6. I view the pressure of important performances as helpful and I perform well in these circumstances.

_____7. I perform well after making mistakes as the pressure starts to build.

_____8. I love the challenge of performing in high-pressure situations.

_____ TOTAL (Add up your scores)

11-16 Great! It looks like you have learned to maximize your ability to handle pressure.

6-10 You are on your way. Major performances do not seem to have a consistent detrimental influence on your performance, but it would probably help to learn more how to be more consistent in your reactions.

0-5 You really seem to let the situation influence your performance – and in a negative way. It would be helpful to work on managing your physical, mental, and emotional reactions to stress. This chapter can provide some of this information.

NOTE: These comments are very general and you should also look at other sources of information to determine how you react to stressful situations in sport and exercise settings.

BREATH CONTROL:
A somatic anxiety reduction technique focusing on breathing technique and imagery.

4.3 Relaxation Techniques

Somatic Anxiety Reduction Techniques

The first group of techniques works primarily to reduce physiological arousal associated with increased somatic (physical) anxiety. Often in sport and exercise this is concerned with muscle tension, but it also can involve such things as breathing rate, heart rate, and other autonomic nervous system reactions.

Breath Control

It is common for performers under stress to either breathe less often or hold their breath longer, which is the exact opposite of what should be done under stressful circumstances. This typically results in muscles becoming tense, heart rate speeding up, and a reduction in coordinated movement, usually resulting in poorer performance. **Breath control** involves taking a deep breath and imagining that the lungs are divided into three levels:

1. Focus on filling the lower level of the lungs with air by pushing the diaphragm down and forcing the abdomen out.
2. Fill the middle portion of the lungs by expanding the chest cavity and raising the rib cage.
3. Fill the upper level of the lungs by raising the chest and shoulders slightly. Hold this breath for several seconds and then exhale slowly by pulling the abdomen in and lowering the shoulders and chest.

When exhaling, the tension should drain from the body. By focusing on the lowering (inhalation) and raising (exhalation) of the diaphragm, an increased sense of stability, centeredness, and relaxation should be experienced.

Check It Out!

The Matching Hypothesis

There is research to support the idea that anxiety reduction techniques can not only reduce anxiety but also enhance performance.[7] However, interestingly, certainly types of anxiety techniques seem to more effective for certain types of anxiety problems. Specifically, Maynard and colleagues developed something called the matching hypothesis.[8,9] They based this title on their findings that cognitive-based techniques (e.g., Relaxation Response) produced the strongest results for individuals with high cognitive (mental) anxiety. However, somatic-based techniques (e.g., Progressive Relaxation) produced the strongest results for individuals with high levels of somatic (physiological) anxiety. Although there are what are called crossover effects (somatic anxiety techniques helping reduce cognitive anxiety and cognitive anxiety techniques helping reduce somatic anxiety) matching the anxiety technique to the anxiety problem produces the strongest results.

References

Rumbold, J., Fletcher, D., & Daniels, K. (2012). A systematic review of stress management interventions with sport performance. Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology, 1 173-193.

Maynard, I., & Cottonm, C. (1993). An investigation of two stress management techniques in a field setting. The Sport Psychologist, 7, 375-387.

Maynard, I., Smith, M., & Warwick-Evans, L. (1995). The effects of a somatic intervention strategy on competitive state anxiety and performance in semiprofessional soccer players. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 9, 51-64.

PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION:
A somatic anxiety reducing technique involving tensing and relaxing specific muscles in a progressive manner from one major muscle group to another until all muscle groups are completely relaxed.

To help enhance the importance and awareness of the exhalation phase, clients can learn to inhale to a count of three and exhale to a count of six (or inhale for two seconds and exhale for four seconds). This 1:2 ratio of inhalation to exhalation helps slow breathing and deepens the relaxation by focusing on the exhalation phase. Finally, although this is a physically-oriented technique, by asking individuals to focus on their breathing, this can take them away from focusing on other anxiety-producing thoughts and worries.

Progressive Relaxation

Edmund Jacobson's **Progressive Relaxation** forms the cornerstone for many modern relaxation procedures and has become the gold standard of physically-oriented relaxation techniques.[10] This technique involves tensing and relaxing specific muscles in a progressive manner from one major muscle group to another until all muscle groups are completely relaxed. Progressive relaxation rests on a few basic assumptions:

- It is possible to learn the difference between muscle tension and relaxation.
- Tension and relaxation are mutually exclusive; a muscle cannot be tense and relaxed at the same time.
- Relaxation of the body through decreased muscle tension will, in turn, decrease mental tension.

In essence, relax the body and it will relax the mind.

The tension-relaxation cycles develops awareness of the difference between tension and lack of tension. Each cycle involves maximally contracting one specific muscle group (and hold that for 5–10 seconds) and then attempting to fully relax the same muscle group, all the while focusing on the different sensations of tension and relaxation. When a person can detect tension in a specific muscle or area of the body (such as the neck, shoulders, or hamstrings), then with practice, they can relax that specific muscle. Upon completing all of the tense-relax cycles and feeling the body fully relaxed, the next step is to give a self-instructional cue such as "relax" or "calm." After the technique is learned, one can simply use one of these cue words and scan the body for any residual tension before competing or exercising.

Many commercial progressive relaxation audio tapes are available on the Internet, and there are many different variations of Jacobson's technique, which originally took 30–45 minutes to complete.[11] Shorter versions (with three cycles) have developed such as the one by Ost, which is highlighted as follows.[12]

- Phase 1: 15-minute progressive relaxation session practiced twice a day, in which muscle groups are tensed and relaxed
- Phase 2: Release-only (relax) phase which takes 5–7 minutes to complete
- Phase 3: 2–3-minute version of release-only phase with the use of the instructional cue "Relax" at the end of the session, which is finally reduced to a few seconds to relax

This is then practiced in specific situations. For example, a golfer who becomes tight and anxious when faced with important putts could use this technique in between shots to prepare for difficult putts.

Cognitive Anxiety Reduction Techniques

Some relaxation procedures focus more directly on relaxing the mind than do progressive relaxation and breath control. The argument is that relaxing the mind will relax the body. Both physical and mental techniques can produce a relaxed state, although they work through different paths. What mentally tough performers have learned is to match their relaxation procedure to the type of stress they experience. That is, if experiencing stress physically through muscle tension, racing heart, and rapid breathing, then a physically-oriented technique is most effective. However, if experiencing stress by worrying, having negative thoughts, and becoming apprehensive, then a mentally-oriented technique would be best.

Relaxation Response

Herbert Benson, a physician at Harvard Medical School, popularized a scientifically sound way of relaxing that he called the **Relaxation Response**.[13] Benson's method applies the idea of meditation (in current day terminology, *mindfulness*) but eliminates any spiritual or religious significance. This is a very popular technique used across different domains to not only help relax but also to concentrate and become energized. The state of mind produced by the relaxation response is characterized by keen awareness, effortlessness, relaxation, spontaneity, and focused attention (which are many of the same elements that characterize peak performance and experiences). The four basic elements of the relaxation response are shown in **Figure 4-1** and **Table 4-3**.

RELAXATION RESPONSE:
A cognitive relaxation technique in which a person meditates without a spiritual or religious aspect.

Figure 4-1
Four Basic Elements of the Relaxation Response

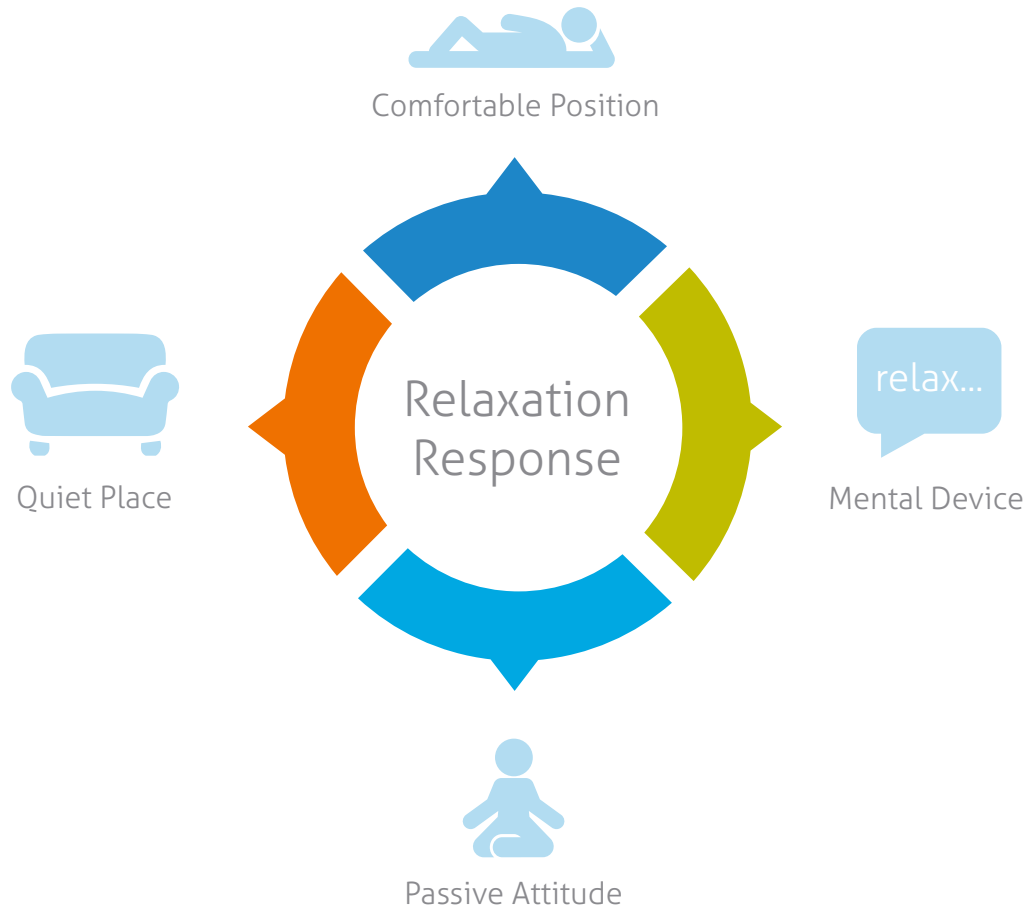


Table 4-3

Elements of the Relaxation Response

Element	Explanation
A quiet place	A quiet place ensures that distractions and external stimulation are minimized.
A comfortable position	A comfortable position is required because the position will need to be maintained for a length of time. In addition, lying down completely is also not advised to avoid falling asleep.
A mental device	Critical to the relaxation response, it involves focusing attention on a single word and repeating it over and over again. Words such as relax, ease, or calm should be selected so as not to stimulate thoughts. The word should be repeated while breathing out.
A passive attitude	Critical to success, and often difficult to achieve, a passive attitude involves letting thought and images enter the mind and move as they will, without making an attempt to attend to them. If something comes to mind, the mental device should gain more focus. Example, if an athlete is focusing on a workout, and thoughts of problems at home start to arise, the athlete should try to let these thoughts pass through their mind as fast as possible and simply go back to repeating their word.

STRESS INOCULATION TRAINING:
A cognitive relaxation technique in which a person meditates without a spiritual or religious aspect.

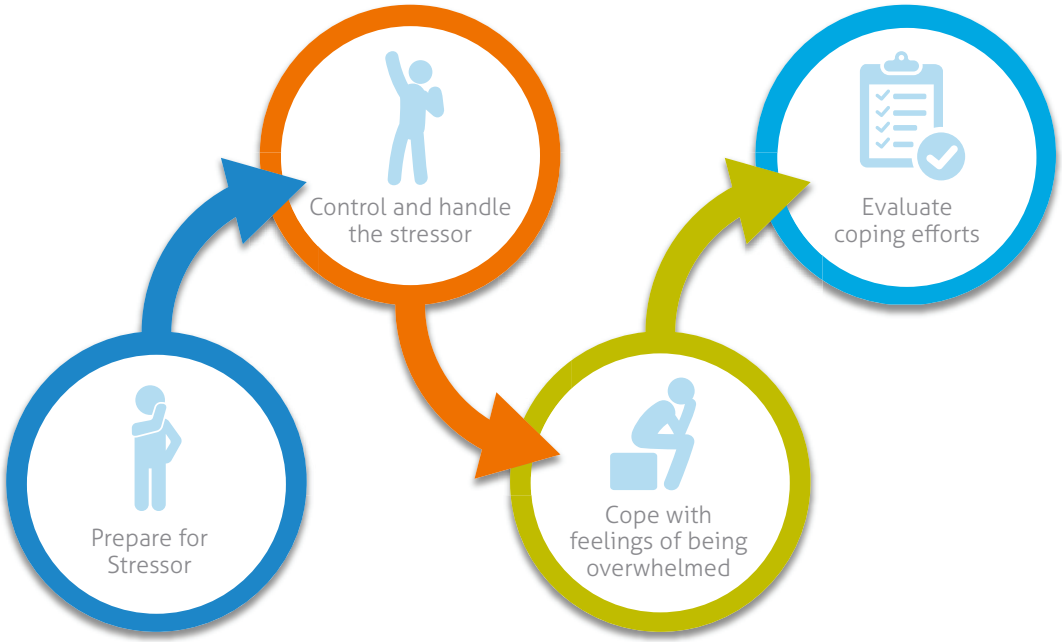
Just like progressive relaxation, relaxation response takes time to learn and should be practiced about 20 minutes per day. Many people find it difficult to control their mind and focus on one thought, as the mind likes to wander. Staying focused on a task is important for success in many endeavors. But at the same time, relaxation response can help reduce muscle tension because by quieting the mind one can quiet the body.

Stress Inoculation Training

One of the most popular techniques used in a wide variety of domains is **Stress Inoculation Training** (SIT). In SIT people are exposed to and learn to cope with stress in increasing amounts, thereby enhancing their immunity to stress; this is similar to inoculation against disease, in which exposure to an agent contagion helps increase resistance to it. SIT helps individuals relax by developing productive thoughts, mental images, and self-statements. For example, people are taught how negative statements ("I'll never be able to stay with this nutrition plan") can undermine achieving objectives and how learning to develop positive images (such as imagining eating healthier and saying no to high caloric foods) can improve behavior.

Figure 4-2

Four Phases of Stress Inoculation



Basically, there are four phases to SIT. **Table 4-4** shows how it might work for a client trying to maintain a meal plan.

Table 4-4

Example: Four Phases of Stress Inoculation Training

Phase	Meal Plan Example	Sport Example
Prepare for stressor	"It's going to be tough going to a buffet with the all-you-can-eat option."	"It's going to be tough playing the #1 team in the nation."
Control and handle the stressor	"Just take a deep breath and focus only on the healthy foods."	"Just remember the game plan and stick to it."
Cope with feelings of being overwhelmed	"Stay calm and take a small plate."	"If you fall behind, take a deep breath and keep focused."
Evaluate coping efforts	"It was tough but you handled yourself well."	"They were a great team and it was tough but we handled them."

COPING:
A process to manage stress when feeling overwhelmed by demands placed upon oneself.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING:
A type of coping that focuses on altering or managing the problem that causes the stress.

EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING:
A type of coping that focuses on regulating emotional responses to the problem that causes stress for the individual.

SIT provides the opportunity to practice coping/relaxation skills, starting with small, manageable doses of stress and progressing to greater amounts of stress. In essence this is like inoculating against stress just like an individual might inoculate against a disease or illness. This, in turn, helps develop a sense of "learned resourcefulness" by successfully coping with stressors through a variety of cognitive techniques.

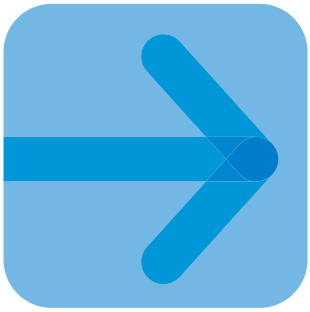
Coping

There is another set of techniques and strategies used to deal with stressful situations that fall under the general term of coping. Before discussing specific techniques, coping must first be defined. The classic definition of coping comes from the seminal work by Lazarus and Folkman, who define **coping** as a process of constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands or conflicts appraised as taxing one's resources.[14] More simply, coping is a process to manage stress when someone feels overwhelmed by the demands placed on them.

The two most widely accepted categories of coping are problem-focused and emotion-focused. **Problem-focused coping** involves efforts to alter or manage the problem that causes the stress. In essence, this type of coping is used primarily when the stressor is amenable to change. For example, after having dropped out of two previous fitness programs after just a few weeks, Jim starts another program because he has gained 25 pounds in the past two years and it's starting to make him feel tired and lethargic. At the same time, his boss says he needs Jim to do a big project, which requires a lot of travel over the next month. Thus, the demands of the situation tax Jim's resources and he needs to develop a way to cope with this situation. He could use some problem-focused coping techniques to cope with the problem. Specifically, he might use time management to better organize his day and work schedule to find time for exercise. By rearranging his schedule and being more efficient in his time management, Jim realizes that if he gets up one-half hour earlier he can actually get an hour workout in before having to be at his first meeting.

The other category of coping is known as **emotion-focused coping**, which entails regulating emotional responses to the problem that causes stress for the individual. This type of coping is generally used when the situation really cannot be changed. Therefore, emotion-focused coping usually includes efforts to change the meaning of the situation and not the actual problem itself. For example, Jan is trying to stick to her meal plan but she is invited out to dinner where there is an all-you-can-eat menu. Despite her best intentions, she just can't resist the all-you-can-eat menu (especially when all her friends chose this menu) and winds up eating way too much food. That evening she is beside herself, really berating and beating herself up because she had no self-control and went far off her meal plan. Although she cannot change the fact that she ate too much, she can change how she reacts to this overeating episode. This is where emotion-focused coping can come into play. Specifically, she might use a relaxation technique to help calm herself down. She also might employ a cognitive restructuring technique where she could change the meaning or interpretation of the situation. Instead of viewing herself (and her meal plan) as a total failure and that she "blew it again," she could reappraise the situation as an understandable failure to stay with her meal plan in a very difficult circumstance, and remember that it is only one evening. She could get back on her meal plan the next day and be right back on track.

Table 4-5 lists some of the most utilized coping strategies:[15,16,17]



Think About It:

Take a look at the commonly used coping strategies in Table 4-5. You may find that you have used some of these in the past, without realizing that you are using a coping strategy. In what situation have you used each type of strategy?

Table 4-5

Commonly used coping strategies

Coping Strategy	Description
Thought control	Blocking distractions, using coping thoughts such as "I can do it"
Rational thinking	Taking a rational approach to oneself and the situation
Task focus	Narrowing focus
Positive focus and orientation	Focusing on belief in one's ability
Social support	Encouragement from coach, family, friends, and teammates
Pre-performance mental preparation and anxiety management	Mental practice, pre-performance routines, and relaxation strategies
Time management	Making time for personal growth and daily goals
Training hard and smart	Applying work ethic, taking responsibility for one's training

On-Site Coping

In addition to the techniques discussed so far, other on-site procedures can be used to help clients cope with performance anxiety. These techniques are not backed by scientific research, but come from applied experience with different types of performers:[18]

- *Smile when you feel tension coming on.* It is difficult to be stressed, mad, or upset when smiling. Smiling takes the edge off a potentially anxiety-producing situation and keeps things in perspective.
- *Have fun*—enjoy *the situation.* Many times athletes and clients put pressure on themselves to perform well or to stay with a fitness program. But the best way for them to perform well or adhere to a fitness program is to enjoy what they are doing.
- *Slow down, take your time.* When things are not going well, and individuals become mad and frustrated, they tend to rush and do not perform well or their technique breaks down.
- *Stay focused on the present.* Thinking about the future or past usually results in increased anxiety. As noted earlier, using routines can help individuals focus on the here and now instead of worrying about future or past events.

Summary

- Anxiety and the ability to cope with anxiety play a large role in mental toughness.
- Anxiety comes in two types, cognitive and somatic, and also can be seen or interpreted as facilitative versus debilitative.
- Increasing awareness of anxiety states is critical, as well as the ability to assess how well an individual excels under pressure.
- There are a variety of anxiety reduction techniques:
    - Somatic anxiety techniques (breath control, progressive relaxation)
    - Cognitive anxiety techniques (relaxation response, stress inoculation).
- Coping strategies can be divided into emotion-focused (used when the situation is not amenable to change) and problem-focused (used when the situation is amenable to change).

Revisiting the Scene

Remember Jackie from the scenario presented at the beginning of this chapter? She won a full-ride golf scholarship to the university of her choice and was starting to feel the pressure to perform. This pressure was starting to affect her golf game and her golf coach Jose was getting worried about how distracted she seemed during practice.

- How might Jose help Jackie to become more aware of her anxiety?
- How can Jose and Jackie determine how effectively or ineffectively she is handling the pressure she is under?
- What types of anxiety reduction techniques could help Jackie during golf practice and tournaments?

Scene Review

Jose can help Jackie become more aware of her anxiety states by having her follow the steps to increase anxiety awareness by having her complete the Checklist of Performance States for her best-remembered performance and her worst-remembered performance and compare the two.

To help Jackie determine how well she is handling the pressure, Jose can also advise her to take the "Excelling Under Pressure" questionnaire. Jose can then walk Jackie through the breath control technique and progressive relaxation technique to help with the physical symptoms of anxiety. And finally, he can take her through the relaxation response, stress inoculation, and coping exercise techniques to address the mental side of her anxiety.

References

1. Johnson, M. (1996). *Slaying the dragon.* New York: Harper-Collins.
2. McGrath, J. (1970). Major methodological issues. In J. McGrath (ed.), *Social and psychological factors in stress* (pp. 19-49). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston
3. Eubank, M., & Collins, D. 2000). Coping with pre- and in-event fluctuations in competitive state anxiety: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Sport Sciences,* 18, 121-131.
4. Hanton, S., & Jones, G. (1999). The acquisition and development of cognitive skills and strategies: 1. Making the butterflies fly in formation. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 1-21.
5. Orlick, T. (1986). *Psyching for sport: Mental training for athletes.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
6. McCann, S., Petersen, K., Haberl, P., & Baumann, J. (2006).USOC's coaches' mental training manual. Colorado Springs, CO:
7. Rumbold, J., Fletcher, D., & Daniels, K. (2012). A systematic review of stress management interventions with sport performance. Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology, 1 173-193.
8. Maynard, I., & Cottonm, C. (1993). An investigation of two stress management techniques in a field setting. The Sport Psychologist, 7, 375-387.
9. Maynard, I., Smith, M., & Warwick-Evans, L. (1995). The effects of a somatic intervention strategy on competitive state anxiety and performance in semiprofessional soccer players. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 9, 51-64.
10. Jacobson, E. (1938). *Progressive relaxation.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
11. Weinberg, R., & Gould, D. (2011). *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
12. Ost, L. (1988). Applied relaxation: Description of an effective coping Technique. *Scandinavian Journal of Behavior Therapy,* 17, 83-96.
13. Benson, H., & Proctor, W. (1984). *Beyond the relaxation response.* New York: Berkley
14. Lazarus, R., & Folkman, S. (1984).*Stress, appraisal and coping.* New York: Springer-Verlag.
15. Dale, G. (2000). Distractions and coping strategies of elite decathletes during their most memorable performances. *The Sport Psychologist*, 14, 17-41.
16. Gould, D., Eklund, R., & Jackson, S. (1992). Coping strategies used by more versus less successful Olympic wrestlers. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport,* 64, 83-93.
17. Greenleaf, C., Gould, D., & Dieffenbach, K. (2001). Factors influencing Olympic performance: Interviews with Atlanta and Nagano U.S. Olympians *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 13, 154-184.
18. Kirschenbaum, D. (1997). *Mind matters: Seven steps to smarter performance.* Carmel, IN: Cooper.