



PERFORMANCE ANXIETY: YOUR BEST FRIEND?

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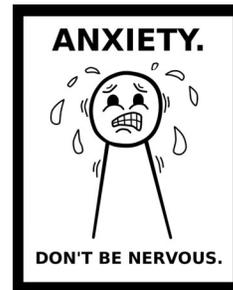
GOALS FOR TODAY

- What is anxiety and why do we have it?
- How to use anxiety to your benefit



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- Combination of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to a perceived threat. “Fight, flight, or freeze” response.
- **Physical responses:**
 - Increased heart rate and respiration
 - Sweating
 - Trembling
 - GI problems



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- **Cognitive Responses**
 - Hyperfocus on perceived threat/impaired focus in other areas
 - Ruminative thoughts about perceived threat
- **Emotional Responses**
 - Nervousness
 - Sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- **Behavioral Responses**
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Avoidance of things that trigger anxiety



WHY IS ANXIETY EVEN A THING?

- Advantageous to survival to be very alert and able to respond to potential threats
- Developed a “threat-detection and response system” – the sympathetic nervous system – prepares body to respond to imminent danger



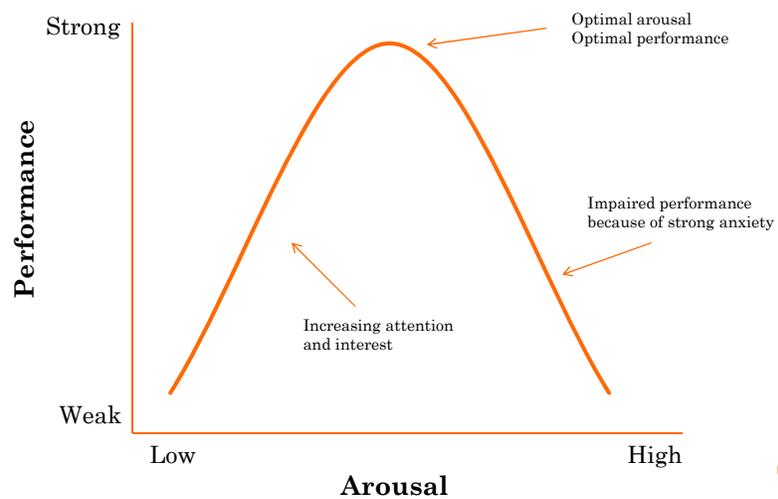
ANXIETY LEVEL AND PERFORMANCE



ANXIETY LEVEL AND PERFORMANCE

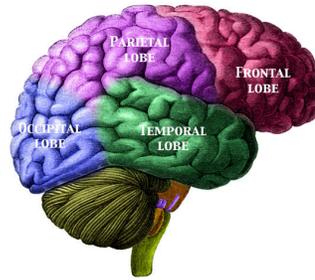
- Some anxiety is helpful to performance, too much anxiety hinders performance

YERKES-DODSON LAW



STAYING AT THE “SWEET SPOT”

- Engage your neo-cortex
 - Assess the situation rationally rather than emotionally
 - Is it actually “life and death”
 - Become aware of your thinking about the situation
 - What is a reasonable level of anxiety – distinguish between the reality of the situation and your feelings about the situation



STAYING AT THE “SWEET SPOT”

- Consider the task
 - Performance decreases earlier for complex tasks (e.g., sprinting vs. highly technical musical performance)



LEARNING TO MANAGE THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Prevention

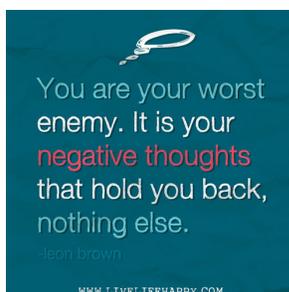
- Practice. Be confident in your ability to manage the situation.
- Perfect vs. Best vs. Optimal Performance – set realistic goals

PRACTICE
makes
PROGRESS,
NOT
PERFECT.



LEARNING TO MANAGE THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Thoughts matter



LEARNING TO MANAGE THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Make mindfulness a daily practice



LEARNING TO MANAGE THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

○ Mindfulness Apps

- The Mindfulness App
- Headspace
- Calm
- Mindbody





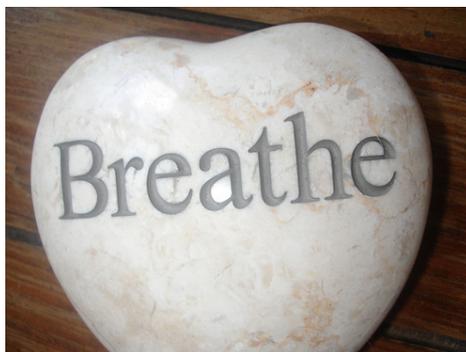
TURNING DOWN THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Progressive muscle relaxation



TURNING DOWN THE SYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM

Abdominal Breathing

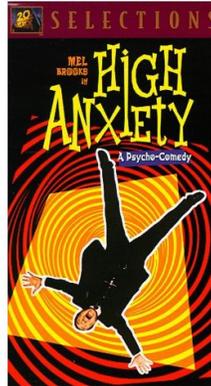


TURNING DOWN THE SYMPATHETIC
NERVOUS SYSTEM

- o Four Square Breathing

BEYOND PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- Chronic
- Irrational
- Interferes



BEYOND PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- Counseling
- Medication



REFERENCES

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