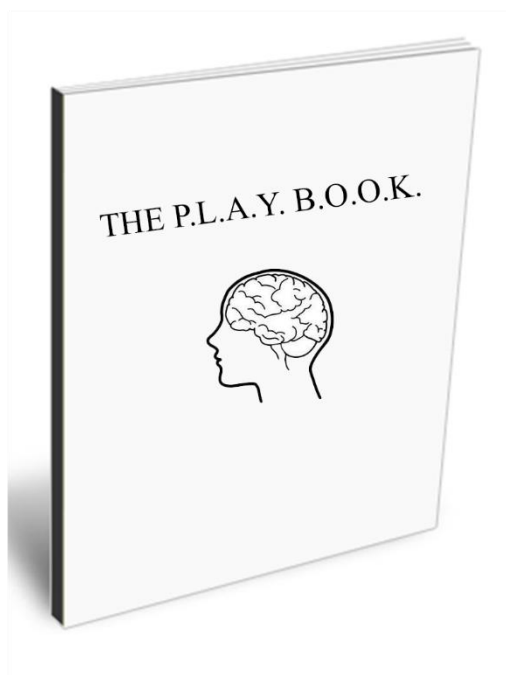


# The P.L.A.Y. B.O.O.K.



By:  
Nicholas Alexander Davenport, M.S.

## What is the P.L.A.Y. B.O.O.K.

**P**ractically

**L**earning

**A**ll

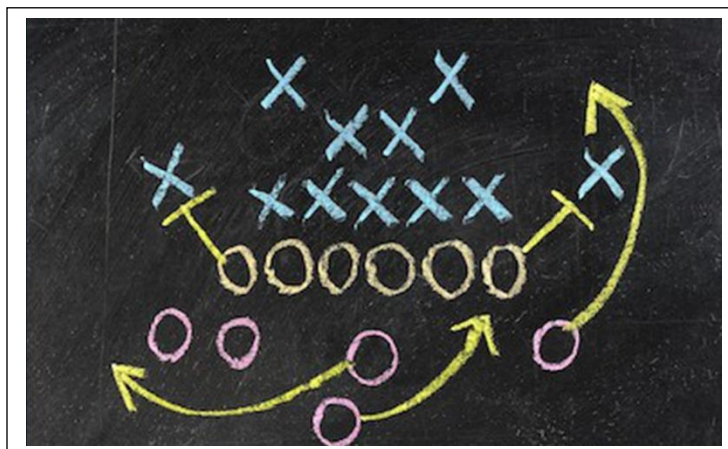
**Y**our

**B**rain's

**O**pportunities

**O**bstacles and

**K**nowledge



This acronym represents how someone must forage to find their mental capabilities to facilitate any of the psychological and physical traits that can get them to the level they wish to achieve. Simply put, once you learn your P.L.A.Y. B.O.O.K. (just like with the actual playbook for sports team) you will be able to execute better and efficiently.

The mental game is what sets the stage for you to physically perform. The P.L.A.Y. B.O.O.K. is an educational workbook to help people from all types of demographics to have all the mental tools they need.

## **What is the goal?**

The outcomes of this workbook are as follows:

- Being in charge of your thoughts and using them productively
- Managing stress and worry
- Creating goal directed focus and concentration
- Understanding your personality and how it can affect your performance and your team/coworkers/friends/family
- Improve cognitive skills to react faster and make better decisions
- Getting in the right mind state for your performances
- Set goals efficiently

## What are mental skills?

Executing key movements and behaviors, performing under high-pressure situations or just being able to focus amongst chaos can be quite beneficial to anyone. Mental skills are a systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment, or achieving life/self-satisfaction. Acquiring these extra skills can help someone separate themselves from good to great.

Mind.Body.1. (our company for brain/mental performance) uses a multi-disciplinary approach so you can have every necessary tool to succeed. It goes beyond just thinking positive or being motivated. We want the people to understand why their brains, bodies and mind do what they do. We believe by understanding these concepts you can have more control of your own performance. When you are equipped with these tools you can have the best **OPPORTUNITY** for consistent peak performance!

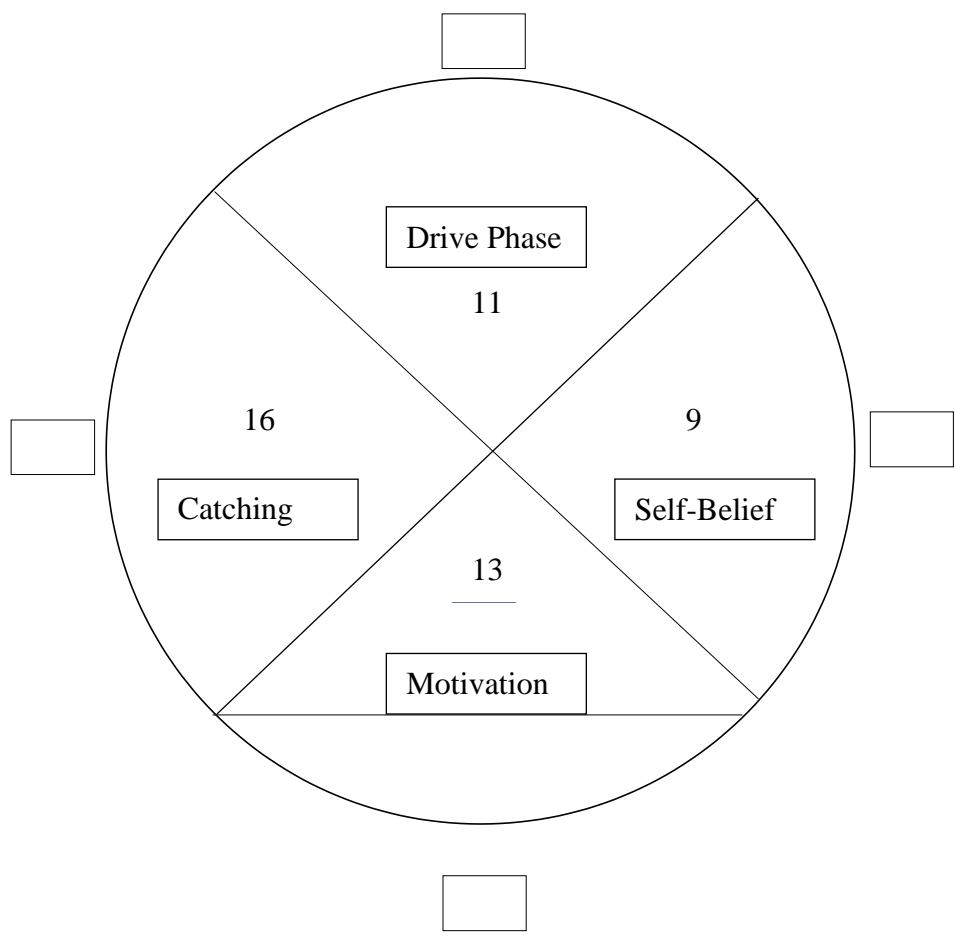
## **Why is it important?**

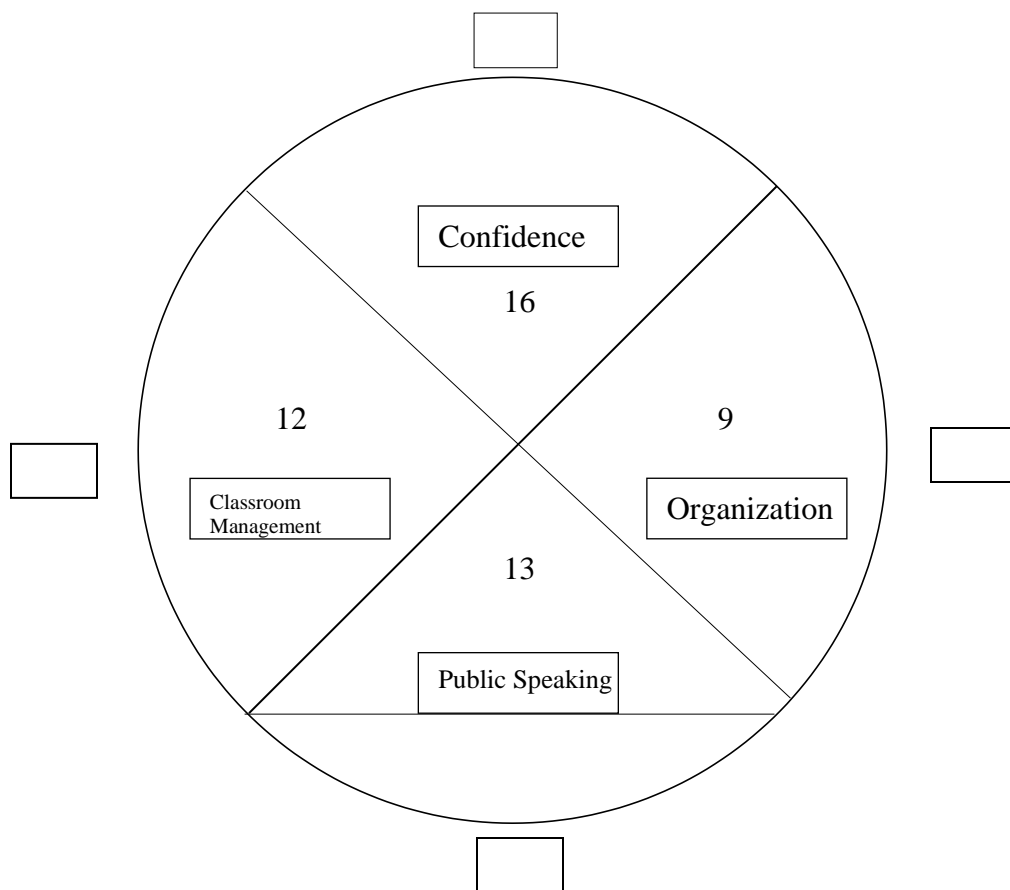
Too often when a less than preferred performance occurs we are left with questions. Things like what happened or where did you go wrong? The answer isn't necessarily that apparent, but if someone isn't mindful of the thoughts preceding the task or performance, it'll be more difficult to pinpoint where it went wrong. Many think it's a matter of chance or something just not going your way, but at the highest of levels you cannot afford to leave anything to "chance". So much emphasis is put on the physical but here we look to shed light on what goes on in the space between your ears. The following will go over mental training from a variety of concepts and methods so you can ensure optimal performance!

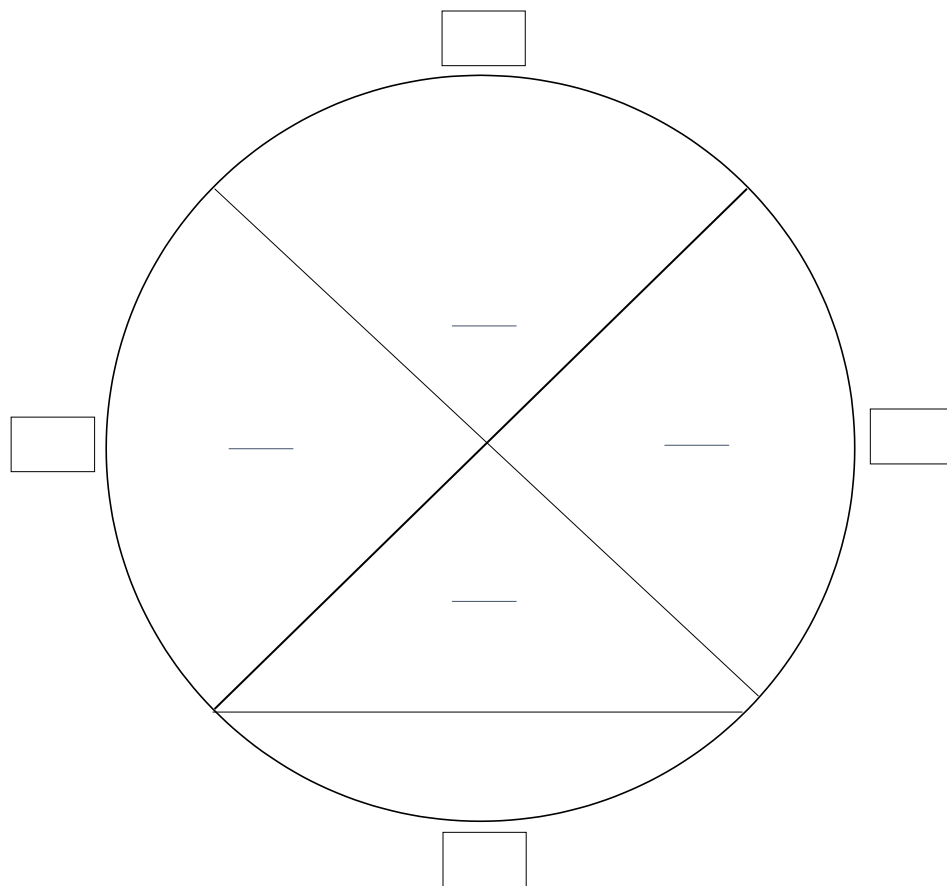
### Performance Profile:

When performing, it is good to have a benchmark to strive for. By outlining what an ideal performance looks like, a standard is set, and you can reassess to judge where you measure up in the future. The performance profile gives you a tangible and measurable way to achieve your goal.

**How to use the Performance Profile:** Rate a skill from 1-20 (1 being the lowest and 20 being the highest) and choose skills pertinent to what your performance would entail. Try to imagine someone with a skill set you respect and rate what you think they are on your given skills. Use this as a metric to compare yourself. Be honest and realistic with what you rate yourself as this profile is to help you map out where you are and how to improve it. Below is an example of a performance profile for a wide receiver and a schoolteacher.







### 2 Minute Drill

You can map out your performance! Know what it is, what it looks like and what can stop it.

Prioritize which skills and traits are needed for you and work on them!



## Performance Routine

Do you leave your performance to chance? Well, if you must think about it, then you're probably not thinking about it! What I mean is, you should have a set routine when performing. This isn't limited to sport performances either. Taking a test, giving a speech or even starting a shift at work can all be approached with the mindset of peak performance!

A pre-performance routine helps you quantify how you get ready to perform. This allows you to recall how you went about preparing. Most times when people are asked how they did it (whether a good or bad outcome) they respond with "I don't know" or some cookie cutter answer like "I gave it my all". When we can tell you how, we can then attribute the performance to routine rather than chance and assess how to be consistent or revamp the approach. With these steps you can help alleviate some of the stress and anxiety of performing because you'll have a plan of action.

**Preparation:** Get your mind mentally engaged in the task at hand by physically arousing your body!

**Focusing:** Targeting your thoughts, vision and emotions to a place where you can be relaxed and in tune with the environment and task at hand.

**Execution:** Wrap up the lingering thoughts and make it happen!

## Pre-Performance Routine Checklist

### Preparation Phase

- Take 3-5 slow deep breaths (3 count on the inhale, hold 2 seconds, then 4 count on exhale).
- Perform physical cue such as a tap on the table or stretching to touch your toes. The goal is to physically alert yourself.

**Physical Cue:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Focusing Phase

- Before taking care of business see the performance you want to have, words you want to say, the moves you want to make and how you want the outcome to play out. (Repeat 3x)  
(For Physical Performance)

- Have a set number of repetitions (i.e. swings dribbles, etc.) every time! Doesn't have to be the same each time but go in with a number in mind. **Count:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Execution Phase

- Choose a verbal cue to say before carrying out the task that allows you to clear your mind and concentrate on the situation at hand. For example, "It's just me and him, let's go!"

**Mindful Verbal Cue:** \_\_\_\_\_

(For Physical Performance)

- Find a focus point before the action begins. Don't aimlessly shift your gaze.

**Focus Point:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Choose one last verbal cue that has to do with performance but pertains to external outcomes as we don't want to bring attention to physical task.

**Performance Verbal Cue:** \_\_\_\_\_

Now **EXECUTE**, You Got This!



### 2 Minute Drill

Whether the performance is good or bad, you should know the exact steps that led up to it! With your performance routine you should get focused and have accountability on your actions.

## 5 Word Resume

If you were to apply for a job, more than likely the company would require you to fill out an application and submit a resume so they can see what experience and skills you possess. This is common practice and can help the company have faith in hiring the applicant.

Let's apply that same concept to your mental skills. Sometimes you need keep a list of traits that remind you of what you are capable of. Now this list shouldn't be accomplishments but more so single words to describe how you are or how you've been in the past. The five words should really paint the perfect picture of what you wish to describe.

For example:

### **Driven, Talented, Impervious, Agile, Unique**

Now this may seem like a simple list of words but the words you choose should invoke something within your being to why you are or were these words. The words you choose can be a feeling you currently feel at the moment or how you've felt in the past. If you currently can say you feel like the word(s) chosen, then be mindful of what you are doing to feel that way. Think of your daily habits, thoughts and actions to ensure you can consistently continue these traits. If you aren't currently feeling like your resume, then remember what you were doing when these traits were prominent.

Word	Rationale
1. Driven	I worked through an overloaded schedule with minimal resources.
2. Talented	I'm an athlete, musician and speak 2 languages
3. Impervious	Had some hard news but I played through it.
4. Agile	When situations change, I adapt.
5. Unique	The approach I have to my endeavors is one of a kind.

The above example is to give you an idea, but when you come up with your resume, try to pinpoint the specific moments and scenarios that made you feel most like the words that you chose.



### 2 Minute Drill

What we say to ourselves is important, we can say up to 500 words a minute in our head. So, recalling things that contribute to productive thinking is crucial. Use the resume to reaffirm what you already know you are capable of!

## **PPO Goals (Process, Performance, Outcome)**

What do you want to achieve? You've probably heard more than once that you have to set goals to accomplish anything, but this is usually a pretty vague overview. There are many different types of goals but here we will focus on process goals, performance goals and outcome goals. When most think of a goal they are usually referring to the outcome or result. For example, if we use the example of getting in shape or losing 25 pounds, most will think work hard and it will happen. This would be an outcome goal. The unfortunate thing about outcome-based goals is that we have little to no control over them. What we do have control over is the process, this is the actual action directly from our own behaviors. Using the weight-loss example, going to training sessions is in your control. Getting proper sleep and nutrition is fully in your control. These process goals lead to performance-based goals. Things such as losing weight and improving strength and health are performances derived from your process. Performance goals are closer related to the effects of your process and lead to the outcomes. If you perform well, you can get closer to the desired outcome! This isn't saying you have no control over the outcome but the emphasis from a mental level is better managed when we work on what we can control and directly affect.

## Process → Performance → Outcome

	<u>Extracurricular</u>	<u>Health/Fitness</u>	<u>Work/Life</u>
Process	Find an interesting book to read.	Get to the field 20 minutes early.	Made it to all my meetings promptly.
Performance	Read 10 pages a day.	Complete the allotted drills sufficiently with required times and reps.	Got a good review from boss
Outcome	Finish book within the month.	Completed all my sessions.	Got a pay increase

	<u>Extracurricular</u>	<u>Health/Fitness</u>	<u>Work/Life</u>
Process			
Performance			
Outcome			



### 2 Minute Drill

Process shapes your performance; performance lays the way for the outcome. You dictate how you perform but not 100% of the outcome is in your control. This is why you do the most you can do for the parts within your control.

## Visualization

The brain interprets whatever it perceives based on the individual. How we attribute how what we see is internalized and deemed real. When you visualize an action there is are physical components involved. Our brain fires and triggers the region of the body involved even if there's no actual movement. So, in theory by practicing or mentally rehearsing the task in your head, it's as if you've done it numerous times before ever truly executing it in real life!

The following section will show you how to apply these skills to practice your mental rehearsal and how to apply it to your football specific training.

**With your eyes closed visualize the following.**

1. A circle, square, rectangle, triangle



2. A red circle, green square, blue rectangle, purple triangle



External (Third Person) as well as Internal (First Person):

### **Practice:**

See yourself executing the goals of the practice session.

### **Job Interview:**

See yourself completing the interview from start to finish. Include how you feel sitting in the lobby, run through the questions you maybe asked. See and feel your heart beating, nervousness, preparedness, any cues you think would be relevant. Make it as real as possible.

\*This will be practiced in silence as well with noise and distractors



## Outcome Imagery

This type of imagery is to prime your brain of the feeling of how you wish to be with the outcome of the performance. We just don't want to mentally rehearse good performances but also how it might feel with the undesired outcome. This way our brain is cognizant of how that may feel.

Visualize the following (a few different examples):

Getting the job
Passing the test
Hitting a new fitness personal best
Getting Picked up by a team



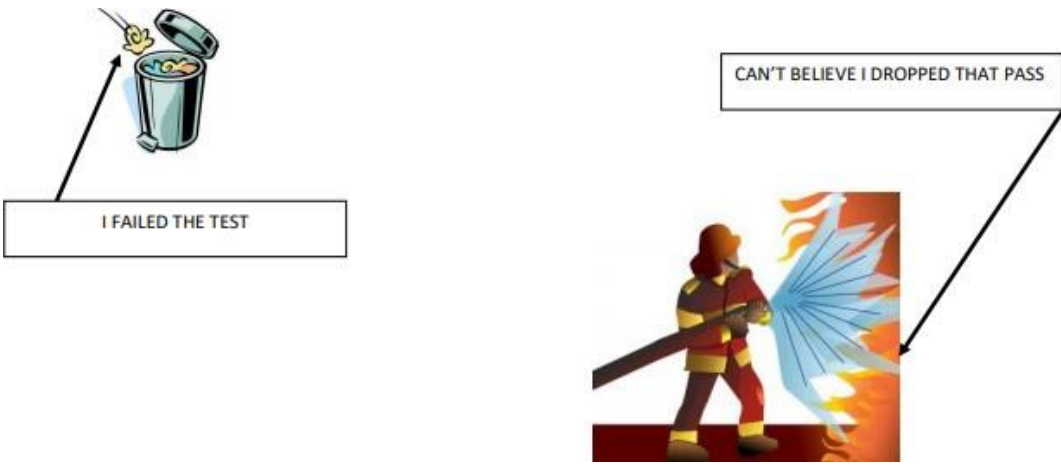
### 2 Minute Drill

Practice seeing what you wish to achieve as well as how you intend to achieve it. This mental rehearsal will prime your body to execute without having to break a sweat and you can virtually practice this infinite times with no physical harm.

## Error Parking:

Need to get that last mistake out of your head? Don't fret or dwell on it, move on! Now there is a proper way you should go about letting go of mistakes. It's ill advised to just ignore mistakes or bottle them up. You must redirect your focus by addressing the issue and then dispatching it appropriately before moving forward. This is where error parking comes in handy! `

Error parking can assist with people who dwell on or are distracted by errors. Simply put, you create an image of taking a distraction and putting it somewhere else away from the present focus of attention. There are several examples that you can use such as: picturing the distraction as a piece of trash and then disposing of it in a trash can or maybe a fire that's burning and water distinguishing the flame. Whatever you may use to get the mind off the distraction, make sure that the technique emphasizes the end of the distracting thought.



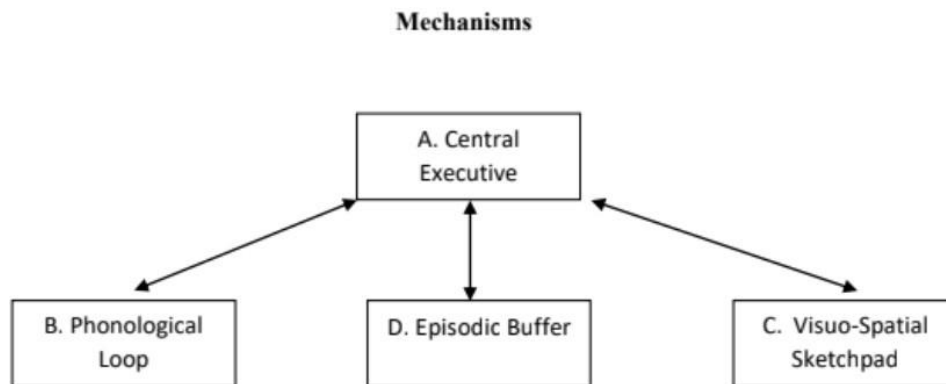
### 2 Minute Drill

Reimagine your mistakes and transform them into items you acknowledge and then move on from them. The past is over and irreversible, but you can control what happens next!

## **Applied Skills**

We often talk about things like awareness, common sense and IQ but in all actuality, they are describing Executive Functions. Executive Functions are the cognitive skills used to solve problems, rationalize situations, react appropriately and regulate emotional responses. In essence, these shape how someone will adapt and accommodate to their environment. The understanding of these concepts will give further insight on where you maybe excelling or coming up or short. Regardless of the particular skill, it will always come down to the executive function(s) involved in carrying it out!

# Working Memory



- A. **Central Executive:** The central executive is like the CEO; it runs the show and dictates what information needs to be attended to and what is deemed irrelevant or inappropriate for the presented task. When more than one cognitive system is being utilized the central executive coordinates and integrates the slave systems which are the phonological loop, episodic buffer and visuo-spatial sketch pad.

**Example:** The CEO coach runs the business, but they oversee a variety of other supervisors and employees that allow the team to execute efficiently. The other staff must do their part to work towards victory.

- B. **Phonological Loop:** This is where sound and language is stored by repeating given information so it can be utilized. If someone gives you their phone number, you continuously repeat it in your head until you can save it in your phone.

**Example:** When you try to lock in new information (for example a phone number) your internal voice may repeat that number until you can write it down or can put it in your phone.

- C. **Visuo-Spatial Sketchpad:** This is how you can create a visual image of something to map out how it may look or be positioned. Think of it like the picture in picture feature for TVs. You mentally visualize a scenario to plan it out or recall past events that have been previously seen.

**Example:** When processing information (looking for your keys) you may visualize in your mind all the places in the house you may have left them. This allows you to process in real time what to do while simultaneously recalling in their mind. This ability allows you adapt and flex your thinking.

- D. **Episodic Buffer-** This is where phonological, visual and spatial information are integrated. Outside of the three slave systems, the episodic buffer considers information that may deal with semantics or assigning meaning to certain references or tasks such as music. It also serves as the link between long term and short-term memory.

**Example:** Think of this the highway where information passes from one place to another. It's passable in both directions so it can travel to and from where it needs to be.



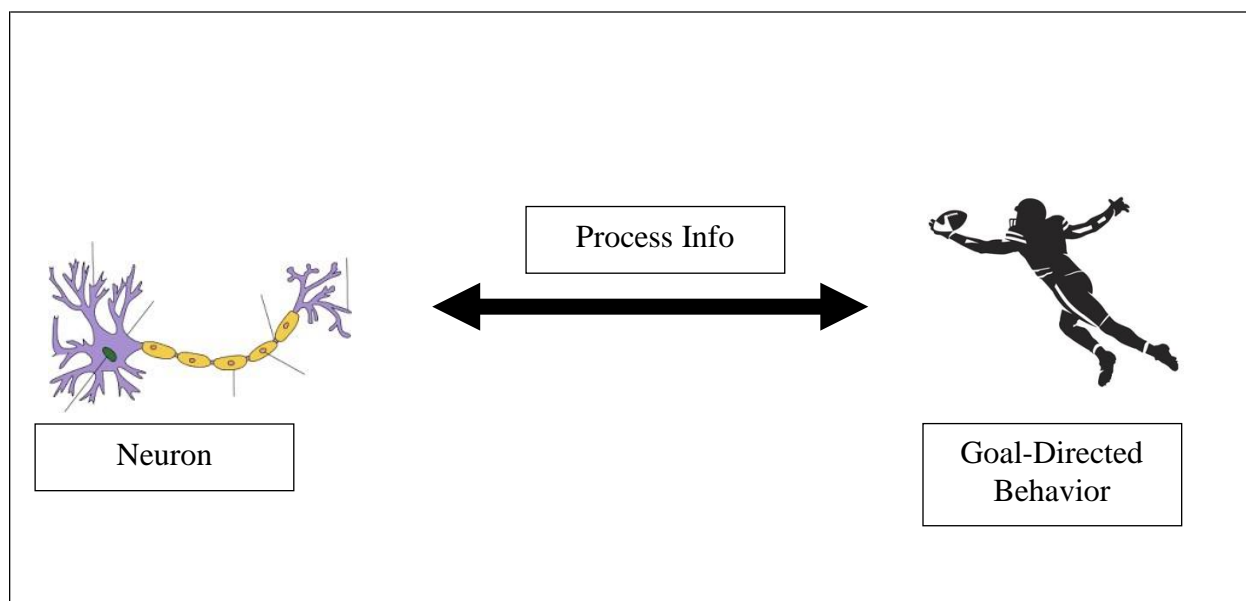
### 2 Minute Drill

Working memory allows you take in information, process what to do with it and put it in to action as it applies to your environment and situations.

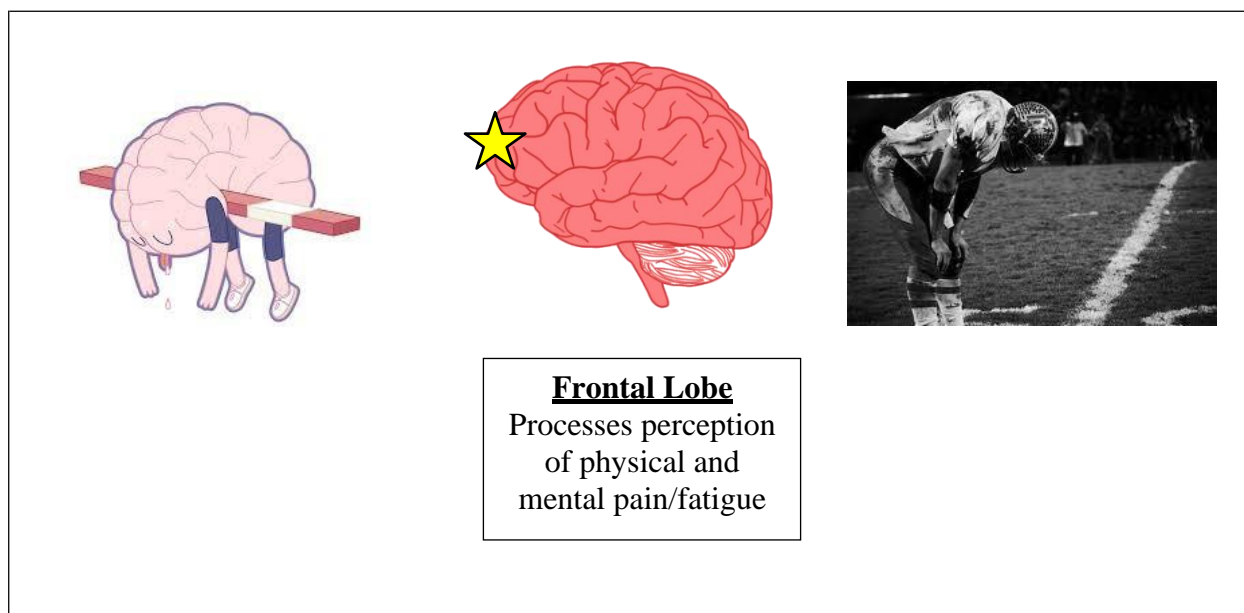
## Brain Endurance

We get exposed to stimulation all day every day. This means that we are presented with information, options and decisions constantly. Considering this, it would be optimal to practice how much you expose your brain to stimulation. Simply put you must practice with your brain just as you would practice with your football skills. The more your brain processes and fires, the more efficient it becomes.

A neuron is a brain cell that sends information from your brain to communicate with other brain cells as well as the body to do everything from brushing your teeth to making a tackle. The neuron emits electrical signals to communicate and as we use our brains the signal gets stronger. Just like the concept of endurance applies to physical performance, we can do the same with mental training. Our brain is always engaged and when we do training that constantly engages it, we get less susceptible to mental fatigue. (The end of this book will have a variety of brain training drills you could do.)



Now outside of the repetitious factor of brain training, the actual brain anatomy associated with pain and fatigue perception can be trained through these means. What this means is the same region of the brain used for perceiving pain is also associated with the perception of mental fatigue. This means that brain training can help your body be more resistant to pain and fatigue. This can be beneficial for many reasons when it comes to performance.



### Ways to Train your Brain

- Doing task that require reaction, decision making, memory. These can be found on apps and other sites.
- Doing mind puzzles, brain challenges/puzzles (i.e., cross words, word search).
- Agility drills that require mimicking a counterpart
- Doing task that quickly put you under pressure with limited times.
- Engaging in mental task that last for minutes at a time.



### 2 Minute Drill

Your brain can enhance physical performance through putting it through training itself. The regions for pain and fatigue are housed in the same regions.



## Parasympathetic Activation

When it's time for action our bodies step up to the challenge! This is known as the stress response or "Fight or Flight". The stress response is our bodies way of physically adapting to a stressful situation or environment. The beauty of stress is that it can come in all shapes and sizes and is perceived differently from person to person.

Below look at the stressors listed and see if any of them stress you out personally. Some things may get to you but not others and vice versa.

Stressor	Does it Stress You?
Stuck in traffic	
Messing up a play	
Getting in an argument	
Going on a date	
Taking a test	
Speaking in public	

When we get stressed a few things take place:

- Heart Rate increases
- Digestion slows down
- Breathing rate increases
- Heart pumps more blood per beat
- Blood rushes to working muscles
- Brain function can get impaired

Since all these responses (sympathetic) are meant to happen in small episodes, frequent stress is detrimental to our physical as well as mental well-being. This is why igniting the parasympathetic response is important. The parasympathetic response is what gets are body back

to a calm relaxed state. There are simple ways to activate your parasympathetic response and we will discuss a simple yet effective way, breathing!

Slowing down and controlling your breath activates a nerve that runs through your heart called the Vagus nerve. The Vagus nerve plays a role in the tempo of your heart rate. When activated it will slow down the tempo of the heart. This is physically getting your body to relax. Technically you can't be both anxious and relax at the same time (at least from physiological standpoint) so by getting your body to physically relax you can get into a state where you calm your mental thoughts.

### **Box Breathing**



#### **4-4-4 Method**

On a tempo of four seconds inhale through your nose, then hold for four seconds, then exhale through your mouth for four seconds. Complete this 4-6 times and do 3-4 sets of this drill. Make sure you're in an environment where you can calm down and get into the proper state of mind. After you get use to this method you can practice it while you train to recenter yourself. Also make sure you fill your diaphragm as you breathe to get that best oxygen consumption.

Getting familiar with what gets you stressed and practicing ways to neutralizing it is important ensuring the best performance opportunities. As mentioned previously, this physically causes your body to calm down and relax, but it's on you to organize your thoughts to get your mind right!



### 2 Minute Drill

Breathing can slow down your heart rate and relax you physically by breathing in a slow and controlled manner. By centering yourself this way you can facilitate an internal environment to get your thoughts in order to excel in your endeavors.

## Personality

Who are you? Serious question, who are you and how does this affect how you perform in life, sport, business, etc. Personality describes the set of traits and behaviors that influences our motivations, ambitions, performances and overall outlook on life. Understanding these traits can be beneficial to see how you personally engage with your surroundings.

There are many types of personality measures, but we will talk about a trait theory called the Five-Factor Model or the BIG-5. This means that the traits aren't an all or nothing but rather a spectrum of multiple types. For example, extraversion describes how people are influenced by being engaged in social activities as opposed to being to their own devices. No one is exclusively extraverted or introverted, but rather on a scale that falls between both.

The acronym for the Big-5 model is OCEAN which stands for:

**O**pen to Experience

**C**onscientiousness

**E**xtraversion

**A**greeableness

**N**euroticism

Trait	Description	Application
Open to Experience	More likely to try new endeavors especially more mentally stimulating.	When changes in protocols with the team happen, they would be more receptive.
Conscientiousness	Prefers to plan and have clear cut goals.	Having goals and well thought out plans to achieve consistent performance.
Extraversion	Has more comfortability in social situations.	Performing or presenting for large crowds isn't intimidating and can even be motivating.
Agreeableness	Open to collaboration and working with others.	Team cohesion and coachability is more likely.
Neuroticism (want low score in this)	More likely to be anxious and worry about things even when not in their control.	Not letting mistakes deter your belief in your ability.

Now that you see how these traits interact with you and your performance, you can assess if you can adjust to improve your abilities. You don't necessarily have to be a poster child for each positive trait but understanding where you measure can allow you to reshape your behaviors. For example, if you are typically introverted you more than likely should find a balance of coming out of your shell when it's game time or a moment when you have to be social. Or maybe you aren't the most organized person, so you need to work on being more scheduled and detail oriented (conscientiousness). Whatever it maybe you can learn to balance these traits to work to your advantage.



### 2 Minute Drill

Your personality is more than just who you are, but it influences how you perform. Learning how to apply the traits when needed can help you excel when needed most.

## Mental Health

At this point we have learned different constructs involving mental and brain performance. All of this comprises of our mental health. This section won't go deep into the clinical implications of your mental health but rather understanding that it must be practiced and taken care of just like you would stretch or ice your ankle.

Here we just want to go over some points to consider managing your mental health.

- **You aren't just your job/sport/family role-** Don't define yourself solely from your work standards, family perceptions or on-field accolades or performance. While this is key to what you do and has contributed to your life, you are so much more. Nurture other talents and traits about yourself not related to specified roles
- **It's ok to mess up-** This isn't said enough but "Nobody's perfect!" It may seem redundant but you're going to mess up, you're going to have bad days and it's going to suck.... **SOMETIMES!** Prepare for those times but know they are temporary.
- **Everyone's burden isn't yours-** It's common that you're in a position where you can change the lives of not just yourself but everyone around you. Be that as it may, you can't take on all of it. This doesn't mean disregard those who have been there for you but understand you must cover you first!
- **Talk about what's going on-** If you're struggling it's ok to share. Whether it's a coworker, coach, friend or mental health professional you should open up. Depression and anxiety are very real things and can be a lot to deal with. Just like you would get a trainer or coach to help with your physical skills or health, you should do the same for your mental health.

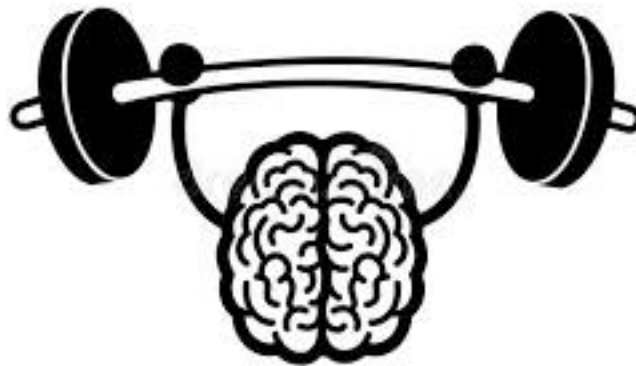


### 2 Minute Drill

Make your mental well-being a priority just as you would your physical. When you do this, it can help facilitate your best opportunities to perform on the field and beyond!

## The Work

The following activities are for you to use to hone your mental skills. These can be done on your own or with friends/teammates. These drills are simple to engage you cognitively but challenging enough so you can be stimulated mentally as well. More drills and activities can be found and downloaded here [www.themb1.com/playbooktools](http://www.themb1.com/playbooktools)





## Concentration Grid

Find the numbers in numerical order as fast as possible. Cross the number out once you find it.



Concentration Grid

---

32	25	29	2	11	28
18	15	30	21	12	9
1	14	22	4	13	3
26	24	34	19	27	20
6	16	35	33	10	17
5	23	8	36	31	7

## Stroop Effect

The color of the word may be incongruent to what the word says. Your goal is to read through them as fast as possible but ignore what the word says and say what the color is of the word for example **GREEN** you would say BLUE. Time how long it takes to finish.

**PURPLE YELLOW RED**  
**BLACK RED GREEN**  
**RED YELLOW ORANGE**  
**BLUE PURPLE BLACK**  
**RED GREEN ORANGE**

## Alpha Spell

The words that are presented need to be spelled alphabetically. As seen in the first box the word RIB is reordered BIR as that's the position the letters appear alphabetically. The goal is to order the letters as quickly and accurately as possible.



### Alpha-Spell

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RIB	B	I	R
JOB			
EYE			
FAT			
FUN			
CUT			
LEG			
PEM			
BAR			
SUM			
LEG			

## **About the Author**

Nicholas Davenport is the Founder and Director of Programming of Mind.Body.1., a published researcher and an adjunct professor at Broward College in South Florida. He has a bachelor's in psychology and a masters in Exercise Science with a specialty in Sport Psychology. Prior to embarking on his career, he was a division 1 track and field in college. Before venturing out on his own, he worked as a strength and conditioning coach with Florida Atlantic University and NFL player Patrick Peterson's pre-draft training camp. After variety of career paths as a neurofeedback technician, middle school teacher and psychology researcher Nicholas would start Mind.Body.1. Mind.Body.1. is a consulting company that provides programming and services on mental/brain performance. Their approach combines psychological, cognitive and physical applications to enhance performance in a variety of fields. This involves performing under pressure, reacting to outside stimuli and being consistent whether it be a speech, baseball game or math test. Davenport's research and mission aims to create programs that can improve cognitive performance through innovative methods that involve personality and stress exposure. His client list consists of professional athletes and organizations such as the U.S. Army, Naval Special Warfare Group 4, Broward Sheriff's Office, Aetna Insurance, the city of Clearwater, the UFC and the Center of Active Aging. Nicholas's work has also been featured on Fox Sports, ESPN, CBS News, Forbes and 103.5 the Beat Miami.

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