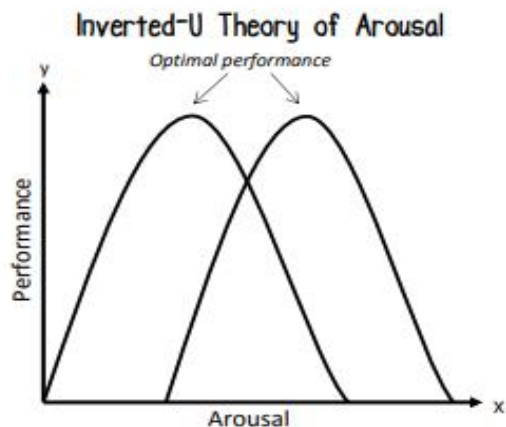


Mental Preparation for Performance

Arousal

Arousal refers to an athlete's state of physical and psychological readiness for performance.

The effect of arousal on performance is determined by the level of arousal and the sport/skill that is being performed. This relationship is outlined below by the inverted-U graph:



The inverted-U theory states that **as arousal increases, there is an increase in performance up to a certain point and then the performer becomes over-aroused and performance levels fall.**

Different skills demand different levels of arousal in order to be performed at an optimal level.

Low Optimal Arousal	High Optimal Arousal
⊗ Fine skills	⊗ Gross skills
⊗ Snooker shot	⊗ Rugby tackle
⊗ Putting in golf	⊗ Triple jump run-up
⊗ Archery shot	⊗ Boxing uppercut
⊗ Shot in curling	⊗ 100 m sprint
⊗ Rugby penalty kick	⊗ Hockey dribble
⊗ Basketball free throw	⊗ Swimming butterfly stroke



Revision Success Tip!

Remember: optimal arousal levels can differ between skills of the same sport. Therefore, some sportspeople have to consciously control their arousal levels through stress-management techniques.

Stress Management

It is important that an athlete is able to control their arousal in order to ensure that it is at the appropriate level for the sport or skill with which they are faced. The techniques that can be used in order to control arousal are outlined below.

Method

How to do it



Deep Breathing

The athlete adjusts their breathing in order to become relaxed.

- ⊗ The athlete should find a relaxing environment
- ⊗ They should perform a series of breaths
- ⊗ Each breath should be slow, deep and rhythmic



Imagery

The athlete visualises, or mentally rehearses, themselves performing in order to increase their confidence.

- ⊗ This can be used by athletes before a competition
- ⊗ The athlete should create a mental picture of their performance
- ⊗ This picture should focus on the skills they will need to perform
- ⊗ The athlete should picture positive outcomes



Positive Self-talk

A pep-talk designed to increase an athlete's confidence.

- ⊗ Athletes should develop a phrase which they repeat to themselves during training
- ⊗ This should be a positive phrase such as 'I can do this'
- ⊗ Athletes can use this method before or during competition in order to reassure themselves