

# One Step Beyond multisport coaching

Visualization - Marty Gaal, CSCS

[www.osbmultisport.com](http://www.osbmultisport.com)

This high school season I had my athletes practice visualization techniques both as a group and individually. Visualization is a powerful mental training tool that enhances an athlete's ability to overcome obstacles and perform at their highest potential.

Visualization - as far as athletics go - is the practice of imagining your competitive scenario and 'seeing' the outcome in the most positive manner for yourself. It can help improve confidence, improve reactions to adverse conditions, and reduce performance anxiety.

Like every other technique you work on, it takes practice to calm the mind and see this vision from start to finish.

The best time to do this varies. The key is to approach the visualization process with a quiet, calm mind.

A few quick steps:

Find a quiet spot, comfortable position, and focus on your breathing. Empty your mind.

Imagine yourself at the start of your race. Try to feel your muscles and hear the sounds of the race. Imagine that you feel fully rested and powerful/strong.

Start the race. You may want to imagine different scenarios, or focus strictly on the best scenario. Personally I like to run through a best scenario, and in later sessions see a few where I overcome various obstacles (flat tire, slow start, and so on).

Feel the effort level during the event. Imagine everything is working perfectly, smoothly, 'effortlessly'.



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Watch your competitors unable to maintain your pace. You accelerate alone or with only 1-2 still with you.

Cross the finish line with a surge and a win.

Savor your mental performance and make it part of your experiences going forward. The mind is a powerful tool, and the memory of a visualized performance can feel just as real to the mind as the memory of a real physical performance.

Confidence in your own abilities is a *huge* part of peak performance. By huge, I mean, *gigantic*.

It can help to have a coach guide this process. But after a few sessions you should be able to do it on your own.

Happy mental training!

You can read more at the following links:

[Effect of Mental Imagery on Sports Performance](#)

- A Plessinger

[Visualization for Sport Performance](#)

- E. Quinn

[Mental Imagery](#)

- B. Mac

Coach Marty Gaal, CSCS - May 2011