

## **Focus Exercises-Teacher Instructions**

### Activity 8.2

I recommend that you practice a few of the “Exercises for Improving your Focus” (from the chapter) in class. Perhaps the easiest one to do in class is #8:

#### **Materials**

- 5 to 10 objects of various sizes, but all big enough for the students to see them clearly from their seats
- OR, as an alternative, an overhead transparency or digital image of several items lined up

#### **Preparation**

- Line the objects up in a location where all of the students can see them, perhaps on a table in the center or at the front of the room.
- Explain the procedure to the students

#### **Procedure**

- Line up the objects
- Focus on all of them at once
- Then zero in on one of them
- Then zero in on its center
- Then on the center of the center
- Let everything else blur in your vision
- Alternate between zooming and out to various parts of the group of objects

You can use any other exercise from the list found in Chapter 8 for in-class practice during this lesson.

Perhaps, you could give the students 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning or end of each class period during this section or unit to practice a focusing exercise of their choice.

See the following page for a list of exercises.

***Drills for when you are not in your performance setting:***

1. When listening to someone speak, (like in class), try to clear your mind of everything and connect fully with what the person is saying. Do this for short periods, then gradually increase the time.
2. Work on holding your focus on something (looking at an object or listening to a sound) for short periods, then gradually increase the time.
3. Practice fully focusing while other people watch or talk around you, like while reading, studying, hammering, etc. Relax, then fully focus.
4. Scan the page in front of you now, pick the last 3 words in this sentence and focus on them. Focus until they stand out more than anything else on the page. Back up your focus to become aware of the whole sentence. Zero in on the word “focus.” You can do this with any book, any time.
5. See how it feels to focus on different kinds of thoughts or feelings. Go on a run and as you extend your legs think “stretch” or “float.” Do it 10 times in a row. See what happens. Then, think “power” when your left foot hits the ground, then the right foot. Do it 10 times. See what happens.
6. Do a body scan. Focus on the sensations in a part of your body.
7. Look at something and fully focus on it. Get absorbed in it.
8. Line up several objects. Focus on all of them. Then zero in on one, then on its center, then on the center of the center. Let everything else blur.
9. Focus on a specific positive thought, repeat it, stop thinking, then refocus on it.

***Drills for when you are in your performance setting:***

10. When practicing, focus on being totally connected to your moves.
11. Relax, imagine the perfect execution of the skill, then do it.
12. Seek the feel of movement, if it feels right, all will be right.
13. Try to recreate the mental and physical conditions that led to past successes.
14. When you feel stressed, slow everything down (walking, breathing, talking, stretching, etc.)
15. When distracted, clear distractions by thinking about the little things you have to do, the technical aspects of your sport.
16. After an error, breathe, clear your mind, shift your focus onto what you need to do next. Get good at this. Stay in the NOW.
17. Focus on the moment—one shot, one stroke, one step, etc.
18. Use simple reminders (“focus”, “smooth”, “relax”, etc.).
19. Embrace the joy of the sport.
20. Feel free to execute moves without evaluation. Just let go. Go by instinct.
21. If your sport requires an awareness of other players or opponents, practice being totally aware of everything, then focusing in to your target.
22. If there are problems, relax the body, relax the focus, try without forcing it.

***Tips to regain your focus (more about this in the next chapter):***

23. Return to the basics, follow the game plan.
24. Focus only on the target or the step right in front you.
25. Reassure yourself that you are trained and ready.
26. Remember that your goals are realistic.
27. Focus on what is going right, not what is going wrong.
28. Imagine the skill perfectly.
29. Focus on little steps.
30. After the performance, analyze what went well and what needs to improve.
31. It should be enjoyable, embrace the joy. If you hate it, consider leaving it.