

The MindStrong Project:

Hey everyone,

This month we want to talk briefly on the benefits of in game awareness. Self-Awareness is conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives and desires. As the fall seasons have ended for most baseball players and we move into the winter off-season, now more than ever is a great time to reflect. Measure your awareness to this point of your career and ask yourself questions from the history of your previous seasons on what worked and what didn't work. In any baseball players career it is important to have a directed focus as you move into your offseason on both the mental and physical pieces of your game.

For this segment of work we will focus on tools you can use in competition. Before we dive into this, take a second and think about your best and worst performance that you can most recently remember...

Go deep into that memory of both experiences and focus in depth on what the environment was like that day. What was the weather? How were the field conditions? Were your parents or friends at the game? Who were you playing? How did you feel both physically and mentally?

Feel free to visualize more in depth of both performances, but realize that regardless of the result most often it is our mental awareness that either steered us in a positive or negative direction. The slightest adjustment in our routines, breathing, focus or preparation can massively impact the flow of the performance.

First, we must acknowledge our self-awareness that gives us the ability to know which tool we need to use and when. Do we need to control our vision? Do we need to put a focus on our breathing? How is our self-talk? Maybe a mechanical adjustment within our movements that we need to change? All of these play a crucial role in our performance and it is our responsibility to learn about ourselves before competition to recognize how to shift state either mentally or physically.

Specifically we're going to focus on the breath and vision. It is important that we understand that our eyes and breath are the first indicators of what's going on with our body and mind. When we start to get nervous our vision will narrow and our breath will start to become shallow and short. We will also start to breathe with our mouth open. For a player to acknowledge this is starting to occur you have the ability to shift gears and shift your mindset into a positive state. Our mind competes in eight second windows before it starts to gather new input that takes our focus away from the moment. Example: Hearing parents in the stands, coaches from the dugout, teammates in the field or opposing team. All of these factors will easily take our focus away from the moment. Whereas the moment holds our best

performance. So you may be asking how do I control my eight second window of opportunity to be both mentally and physically in the moment?

We do this by having a breathing protocol of (2-2-4). Two seconds in through your nose followed by a two second hold. After the hold you want to exhale for four seconds either through your nose or mouth. The longer the exhale the more consistently you can shift gears into a parasympathetic state which means calm or relaxed.

So, next time you find yourself in performance starting to speed up mentally or something physically doesn't feel quite right. Step out of the box or off the mound and take eight seconds to breathe and shift gears into a controlled state of focus and keep your eyes with a wide gaze to eliminate any feelings of narrow vision. For more on breath work or vision control you can follow us on our website...www.mindstrongproject.com or our social media circuits Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:
[@themindstrongproject](https://www.instagram.com/themindstrongproject)

We also speak very often on human performance on our podcast: The MindStrong Project

Thanks you for checking in guys,
Harvey Martin