

## Off-Season Resource Package

This resource package has been created to support your progress during the off-season, focusing on both nutrition and mental performance. Covering a variety of topics and exercises, these materials are structured to guide you through the critical processes of analyzing, planning, and goal-setting—both on and off the water. Each activity includes detailed instructions and examples, designed to accommodate athletes at varying experience levels and foster self-directed engagement.

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## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: INTRODUCTION

### What is Mental Performance?

Mental performance training is designed to help you reach peak performance through tools and perspectives that raise your confidence, help you recover quickly from setbacks, and manage the stress that comes with balancing sport, school, and life.

### Why Now?

The off-season offers a valuable opportunity to focus on enhancing mental performance without the pressures of the regatta season. It allows for reflection on the previous season's competitions while they are still fresh in our minds.

This period is ideal for experimentation, trying out new approaches, and learning through trial and error in low-stakes environments before the summer competitions begin. The off-season provides numerous chances to apply mental performance skills both on and off the water, including activities like time controls, testing benchmarks, and participation in camps.

### Up Next:

The Mental Performance section of this package will bring you through 4 Topics and 3 activities that you can complete independently, in a group, with your coach, or MPC.

**Activity 1: Analyzing Performance using FAST**

**Activity 2: Developing a Plan**

**Activity 3: Goal Setting**

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ANALYZING PERFORMANCE

### Analyzing Performance Using FAST

FAST is an acronym we can use to represent the controllable aspects of performance that must be considered when trying to optimize it: **Feelings, Actions, Sensations, and Thoughts**. An exercise like FAST helps us raise that awareness, so we can target the factors that create inconsistent performances.

#### Feelings

What emotions do you experience when you are performing?  
How do you feel when you are paddling?

Examples: I feel confident when I paddle in practice. I feel intimidated when I line up next to a fast crew. I feel excited when I paddle in crew boats with my friends.

#### Actions

What are you doing physically?

Examples: I take hard strokes while engaging my core through the entire stroke. I keep my eyes focused on the finish line. I practice my start procedure before my race.

#### Sensations

What sensations do you feel within your body?

Examples: I feel my muscles tense and relax as I move through my stroke. I feel my hands gripping the handle of my paddle. I feel water droplets falling onto my head and shoulders when I exit my stroke.

#### Thoughts

What are you thinking about? What is the voice inside your head telling you?

Examples: I was thinking about how the practice was going to be very long and tiring. I was telling myself that I needed to focus on my catch and keep my shoulders relaxed. I reminded myself to breathe and stay relaxed.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: CONTROLLABLES

### Internal and External Factors

Explore the distinction between internal and external factors in your performance assessment. **Internally**, reflect on your actions, emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations—considering elements like your mindset and bodily responses. **Externally**, analyze the impact of factors beyond your control, such as coaches, teammates, weather, and equipment, on the execution of your performance. Understanding both internal and external influences provides valuable insights that will help you complete the following activities.

### Question 1: Brainstorm a list of EXTERNAL factors

Jot down a list of external factors in your training and competition environment.

These are factors outside of your control. Examples: the weather, your competitors, your equipment.

### Question 2: Brainstorm a list of INTERNAL responses

Using the list in Question 1, brainstorm responses that are in your control (internal) to manage the external factors that may arise in training or competition.

Examples: If there is a headwind, I will wear a spray skirt and use self-talk to remind myself that I'm strong. If I am being passed by a competitor, I will refocus on the feeling within my boat and keep my vision on the finish line.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ACTIVITY 1

### Question 1: Describe your BEST performance

Think back to one of your best races. Imagine yourself being there at that very moment. Try to recapture the FAST (feelings, actions, sensations, and thoughts) that led to your best performance and how you were influenced by your environment.

What was internal? What was external? How did you feel before your race? What were you thinking before your race? What did you do after your race?

	Before:	During:	After:
How did you <b>FEEL</b> ?			
What was your <b>ACTION</b> ?			
What <b>SENSATIONS</b> did you have?			
What <b>THOUGHTS</b> did you have?			
How did the external environment affect you?			

### Question 2: Describe your WORST performance

Now, think back to one of your worst races. Try to recapture the FAST (feelings actions sensations thoughts) that led to that performance and how you were influenced by your environment.

What was internal? What was external? How did you feel before your race? What were you thinking before your race? What did you do after your race?

	Before:	During:	After:
How did you <b>FEEL</b> ?			
What was your <b>ACTION</b> ?			
What <b>SENSATIONS</b> did you have?			
What <b>THOUGHTS</b> did you have?			
How did the external environment affect you?			

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ACTIVITY 1

### Question 3: Compare your best and worst performances

What differences do you notice between your best and worst performances?

Did you feel, act and think differently? Was there something about the environment that impacted you? How many of the differences you notice were intentional? Which of the differences do you feel made the biggest impact on your ability to perform at your best?

### NOW WHAT?

Using the information and reflections you've gathered after answering these questions, we will use the next section to learn how to develop a reliable plan to optimize performance tailored to you!

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: DEVELOPING A PLAN

### Components of a Plan

An effective plan considers what you need to do **mentally, technically, tactically and physically**. It should highlight not only relevant actions (e.g. relax, eat 2 hours before a race, attend a post-race debrief) but also relevant cue words or triggers that will help you to focus or refocus when you get distracted.

#### 1. Physical Prep

What do you need to do for your body to be primed to perform? E.g. Complete a full dynamic warmup, refuel post-race to replenish energy lost, and have the cardio capacity to race full distance.



#### 2. Mental Prep

How do you get in the optimal zone of focus and intensity to perform at your best? E.g. visualizing your race plan, using breathing techniques to relax, listening to upbeat music to build intensity, and maintaining a positive attitude.



#### 3. Technical Prep

What needs to be focused on to ensure that the technical elements and skill execution in your performance are effective? E.g. incorporate relevant technical drills into your warmup, and talk to your coach for relevant technical reminders.



#### 4. Tactical Prep

What do you need to ensure that you are ready to react, make strategic decisions and adapt accordingly to changes in your performance? E.g. adjust race plan due to weather conditions, and decide to add an 'up' mid-race to boost your position.



#### 5. Flexibility and Identifying Potential Distractions

What might go wrong? What could distract you from being able to perform at your best? How might you overcome those distractions from your plan? E.g. If the start is delayed, I will talk with my crew members to stay focused on the race plan. If I start telling myself that I'm going to get washed out by the competitor beside me, I will take a deep breath and keep my eyes in my own lane.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ACTIVITY 2

In developing the following checklists for before, during and after your race, consider your reflections from the best vs worst activity. What do you want your FAST to look like? What do you need from your environment (e.g. coaches, teammates, parents)?

### Question 1: Pre-Race Checklist

Develop a checklist for before your race to get into an optimal zone of focus and intensity, anticipate distractions, and appreciate the opportunity you have to perform.

Use the flow chart on the previous page to consider physical, mental, technical, and tactical components in your plan.

### Question 2: During-Race Checklist

Develop a checklist for during your race to remain in your optimal zone of focus and intensity, refocus in the face of distractions, and enjoy being in the moment.

Use the flow chart on the previous page to consider physical, mental, technical, and tactical components in your plan.



## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ACTIVITY 2

### Question 3: Post-Race Checklist

Develop a checklist for after your race to stay focused in moments of fatigue to draw lessons from both positive and negative aspects of your performance, review goals for the future, find satisfaction in some aspects of your performance, and recover.

Use the “Developing a Plan” flow chart to consider physical, mental, technical, and tactical components in your plan.



### NOW WHAT?

1. Experiment with your plan! Use practices and high pressure/simulated competition days (time controls, testing etc.) as opportunities to try out elements from your plan to refine them and continue to make them more meaningful and effective for you. Analyze both successes and defeats to figure out what works best FOR YOU.
2. Build off of this first iteration of your plan. Continue to be flexible and record the adjustments you make to your plan to track the strengths and weaknesses of it. Remember not only to note what you did, but how what you did affected your performance.
3. Share your plan with your coach to get input to help adjust your plan to be as effective as possible.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: GOAL SETTING

Goals provide you with a direction and purpose and give meaning to your pursuits. They are like critical reference points on the map of your progress, allowing you to focus on what matters most and persevere in the face of obstacles.

### Types of Goals

There are several types of goals that you can set to increase your chances of reaching your full potential. Similar to the multiple directional points that are included within any map, you can integrate a hierarchy of goals in your overall plan, such as those below, to have a clear and comprehensive trajectory.

#### Dream Goals

The ultimate wishful goal that can become a reality if you fully commit to developing your potential and skills. e.g. To represent Canada at the Olympics.

#### Long-Term Goals

Realistic goals that you set for several months away (i.e. end of season, nationals) based on what you need to do to ultimately achieve your dream goal. e.g. Finish top 5 in C1 at nationals.

#### Short-Term Goals

Realistic goals that you set every month or week based on what you need to do to achieve your long-term goals. e.g. Improve my start to get off the line and accelerate more aggressively.

#### Deliberate Practice Goals

Daily intentions for each training session. Your coach tells you what to train, but you can choose which aspect of your training you are deliberately focusing on. This could be a mental goal, physical goal, technical goal, or tactical goal.

#### Self-Acceptance Goals

Goals that allow you to accept and appreciate yourself, regardless of your outcomes. e.g. I will feel good about the effort I put in on the water each practice, regardless of whether or not I finish in the top 5 at nationals.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: GOAL SETTING

### Outcome / Performance / Process

As you identify these different types of goals, you can articulate them as **outcome**, **performance** or **process goals**. All three are important to sustain your focus and motivation over time.

#### Outcome Goals

Focus on a particular result you want to achieve. Outcome goals are not completely within your control since outcomes are contingent upon the performance of your opponents. e.g. win the race, finish top 3 in the province

#### Performance Goals

Focus on aspects of your performance you want to improve in order to eventually achieve your outcome goals. Performance goals are more within your control. e.g. improve time in 200m time control by 2 seconds.

#### Process Goals

Focus attention on concrete actions you can execute to improve your performance. Process goals provide you with the most control. e.g. Focus on a strong and connected catch in every stroke.

### SMART Goals

SMART goals are **specific, measurable, action-based, relevant, and time-based objectives**. They help you set clear and realistic targets by outlining exactly what you want to achieve, how you'll measure progress, and when you aim to complete them.

- **SPECIFIC** - Formulate your goal in a clear, detailed, positive manner based on what you want to accomplish or improve. Consider including how you want to feel when specifying your goal.
- **MEASURABLE** - Quantify your goal to measure what you want to accomplish or improve and compare your performances against your current and desired results.
- **ACTION-BASED** - Identify the actions required to reach your goal in order to guide your efforts and focus on appropriate elements or steps.
- **REALISTIC** - Determine if your goal is challenging but attainable based on your current capability and the resources you have.
- **TIME-BASED** - Set a deadline by which you want to reach your goal.

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE: ACTIVITY 3

### Complete this worksheet to set a goal

**\*NOTE: Print multiple pages to plan different goals**

Set as many goals as you feel inspired to! Ensure that you include variety in the goals you set by exploring outcome, performance and process goals, different time frames and goals of self-acceptance. If you find that you have set so many goals that you can no longer keep track of them or are forgetting what you are trying to achieve, take a step back and reevaluate which goals are most important and relevant to your performance.

Check one of the following types of goals:

Outcome  Performance  Process

Check one of the following types of goals:

Dream  Long-Term  Short-Term  Deliberate  Self-Acceptance

My goal is: \_\_\_\_\_

Use the text box to make your goal SMART.

SPECIFIC	
MEASURABLE	
ACTION-BASED	
REALISTIC	
TIME-BASED	

### NOW WHAT?

Monitor, evaluate, and assess your goals by considering factors like current inspiration, desired experience, timelines, performance changes, and progression. Share your goals with individuals like coaches or teammates who can provide support and accountability. Upon achieving a goal, take the time to celebrate and acknowledge the effort invested in the accomplishment.

## NUTRITION: INTRODUCTION

### What is Nutrition?

Nutrition acts as a personalized fuel plan to optimize performance on the water. It provides the right balance of energy, nutrients, and hydration tailored for the demands of training and competition, enhancing speed and endurance, and supporting quicker recovery. Specialized nutrition helps athletes perform at their best and enjoy the sport to the fullest.

### Why Now?

The off-season offers a valuable opportunity to focus on improving nutrition for many reasons:

1. Athletes can address any nutritional deficiencies and restore energy levels that may have been depleted during intense training or competition periods.
2. The off-season provides an opportunity to focus on long-term goals, such as building muscle mass or improving overall health, which can be positively influenced by a well-balanced and targeted nutrition plan.
3. Optimizing nutrition during the off-season sets a solid foundation for the upcoming training and competition phases, helping athletes start the next season with enhanced physical and mental readiness.

### Up Next:

The Nutrition section of this package will bring you through 4 core principles supplemented with resources and activities that you can complete independently, in a group, with your coach, or nutritionist.

**Principle 1: Understanding Pre-, During, and Post-Nutrition Strategies**

**Activity 1: Smoothie Planning**

**Principle 2: Building Balanced Snacks**

**Principle 3: Meal Planning**

**Activity 2: Create a Meal Plan**

**Principle 4: Hydration**

PRINCIPLE 1

**NUTRITION: PRE-, DURING, AND POST-TRAINING NUTRITION**

**Goals:**

**Before**

1. Top-Up Fuel
2. Pre-Hydrate
3. Stomach Comfort

**During**

1. Maintain energy levels
2. Hydrate

**Post**

1. Refuel
2. Repair
3. Rehydrate
4. Replenish

**Before:**

**3 Hours Before:**

- Carbohydrates
- Protein
- Fibre
- Fats

**2 Hours Before:**

- Carbohydrates
- Protein

**1 Hour Before:**

- Simple Carbohydrates

**During**

Consume fluids throughout the training session.

For sessions lasting longer than 60 minutes include a source of carbohydrate to keep energy levels up

**Post**

Eat within 1 hour after training. If less than 8 hours before the next training session or race: eat within 15-30 minutes.

1. Carbohydrates
2. Protein
3. Fluids
4. Electrolytes

**Examples**

**3+ Hours Before:**

- Pasta & meat sauce
- Chicken, veggie & rice stir fry
- Eggs, avocado & toast

**2 Hours Before:**

- Greek yogurt & berries
- Eggs & toast
- PB & J sandwich

**1 Hour Before:**

- Fresh or dried fruit
- Juice or sports drink
- Pretzels

**During**

- Pretzels
- Apple sauce
- Sports drink
- Dried fruit
- Banana

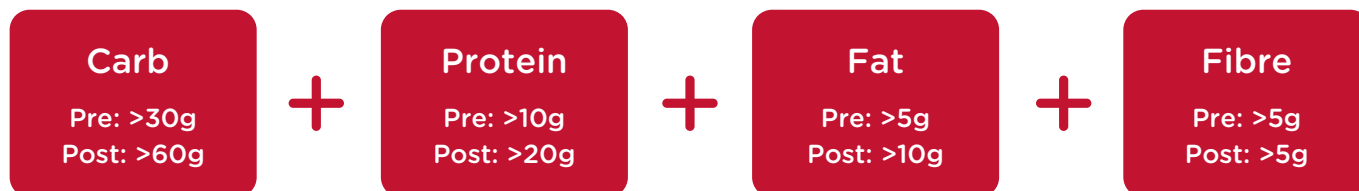
**Post**

- Deli meat sandwich, orange & water
- Smoothie made with greek yogurt & granola bar
- Chocolate milk, banana, handful of nuts, cheese & crackers

## NUTRITION: SMOOTHIE STARTER

Use these examples to kick-start the worksheet on the next page! Explore other options beyond the examples to achieve your nutrition goals! Check out [csiontario.ca/resource-hub](https://csiontario.ca/resource-hub) for more smoothie recipes.

### Nutrition Targets:



### Example Ingredients

Ingredient	Amount	Carbs	Protein	Fat	Fibre
Skim Milk	1 cup	12 (g)	8 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)
Soy Milk (non sweet)	1 cup	3 (g)	8 (g)	1 (g)	5 (g)
Almond Milk (non sweet)	1 cup	1 (g)	0 (g)	1 (g)	2.5 (g)
Greek Yogurt (vanilla 0%)	1/2 cup	12 (g)	9 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)
Orange Juice	1 cup	28 (g)	2 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)
Banana	1	27 (g)	1 (g)	3 (g)	0 (g)
Quick Oats	1/2 cup	27 (g)	5 (g)	4 (g)	2.5 (g)
Berries	1 cup	12 (g)	1 (g)	3 (g)	0 (g)
Mango	½ cup	12 (g)	1 (g)	1.5 (g)	0 (g)
Spinach or Leafy Greens	1 cup	1 (g)	1 (g)	1 (g)	5 (g)
Avocado	½	6 (g)	1 (g)	4.5 (g)	10.5 (g)
Hemp Seeds	1 tbsp	1 (g)	3 (g)	0.5 (g)	5 (g)
Chia Seeds	1 tbsp	4 (g)	2 (g)	3.5 (g)	3 (g)
Natural Peanut Butter	2 tbsp	7 (g)	7 (g)	1.5 (g)	16.5 (g)
Silken Tofu	1/2 cup	3 (g)	9 (g)	0 (g)	3.5 (g)
Cinnamon	1 tsp	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)
Ginger	1 tsp	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)
Turmeric	1 tsp	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)	0 (g)

Get creative! Use the example ingredients above or research the nutrition facts of foods you love to build your own recipes on the next page.

More examples: NSF Certified for Sport® or Informed Choice® protein powder, milk powder, coconut milk, kale, apples, coconut oil, cocoa powder

## NUTRITION: ACTIVITY 1

### Smoothie Planning Worksheet

Whether it's for hydration, pre-workout energy, post-workout recovery, or packing a nutritional punch, smoothies are a versatile solution. Use the tables provided to create Pre-Workout and Post-Workout Smoothies, paying attention to the specific nutrition targets for each to optimize your personalized recipe.

#### Pre-Workout Smoothie

Nutrition Targets: Carb > 30g, Protein < 10g, Fat < 5g, Fiber < 5g

Ingredient	Amount	Protein	Carbs	Fat	Fibre
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
<b>Total</b>		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)

#### Post-Workout Smoothie

Nutrition Targets: Carb > 60g, Protein < 20g, Fat < 10g, Fiber < 5g

Ingredient	Amount	Protein	Carbs	Fat	Fibre
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)
<b>Total</b>		(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)



PRINCIPLE 2

**NUTRITION: BUILDING BALANCED SNACKS**

**Finding the Right Balance**

Snacks are a great opportunity to fuel between meals, keep energy levels up and support muscle growth and maintenance. As part of balanced performance nutrition, avoid going longer than 4 hours without eating. Choose meals and snacks that combine protein and carbohydrates for lasting energy. The balance can help keep you full longer, reduce cravings, increase energy, and prevent overeating at meals.

**Tips for Balanced Snacks**

Avoid going longer than 4 hours without eating. Eat every 3-4 hours.

Look for a minimum of 15-20 grams of protein at each meal.

Look for a minimum of 5-10 grams of protein at each snack.

**Protein + Carbohydrate Examples:**

- yogurt + fruit
- cheese + crackers
- cottage cheese + blueberries or pineapple
- nut butter + apple, banana, or celery
- flavoured tuna or salmon + crackers
- almonds + fruit
- hummus + veggies or pita bread
- milk or soy beverage + cereal
- hardboiled eggs + toast or veggies
- nut butter + English muffin
- cheese + crackers, fruit, or veggies
- yogurt + granola and berries
- yogurt + applesauce
- deli meat + wrap
- milk or soy beverage + oatmeal
- cheddar cheese + toast + tomato
- refried beans + veggies



**Protein = fullness, muscle recovery**  
**Carbohydrate = energy, fibre, antioxidants**

PRINCIPLE 3

**NUTRITION: MEAL PLANNING FOR PERFORMANCE**

**Benefits to Meal Planning**

Meal planning is a great tool utilized by most high performance athletes. Meal planning helps you save time and money, achieve a more balanced diet, and ensure better preparation for training and competition. Experience heightened recovery, setting the stage for sustained success!

**Steps to Meal Planning**

- 1 Identify your goals**

  - Performance-based: increased strength, injury recovery, etc.
  - Fuelling-based: protein at each meal, include more fruit/veggies, improve hydration
- 2 Identify what is in your control and what is out of your control**

Out of control examples: training or practice times, school schedule, kitchen access
- 3 Fuel & Recovery Times**

  - Build snacks/meals surrounding training to ensure adequate pre- and post- nutrition strategies (see Principle #1)
  - Fill in the gaps with snacks/meals to avoid going longer than 4 hours without food
- 4 Create a recipe list**

Choose recipes that will provide multiple servings to help save time
- 5 Build your grocery list**

This will help you save time and money at the grocery store

**Meal Prep Options**

Meal prepping offers various options to streamline your food choices and make healthier decisions effortlessly by preparing key elements ahead of time.

**Prepping**

- Pre-washing fruits and vegetables
- Chopping vegetables and meat (freezing single servings for future use)
- Sautéing or baking veggies for the week
- Creating marinades

**Portioning**

- Cooking multiple servings of a recipe
- Portioning meals into containers
- Pre-portioning snacks

## NUTRITION: ACTIVITY 2

Use the tables below to plan out one week of meals and snacks. Be sure to plan balanced snacks using Nutrition Principle #2. Check out [csiontario.ca/resource-hub](https://csiontario.ca/resource-hub) for easy recipe ideas! Once you've planned out your week, use the second page to prepare your grocery list.

### MONDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### TUESDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### WEDNESDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### THURSDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

## NUTRITION: ACTIVITY 2

### FRIDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### SATURDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### SUNDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Snack	Snack	

### GROCERY LIST

Produce:	Meat:	Cereal/Dry/Canned:
Dairy:	Freezer:	Other:

## PRINCIPLE 4

**NUTRITION: HYDRATION****Benefits of Hydration**

Staying well-hydrated is not only vital for physical well-being and immune function but also directly enhances overall performance, ensuring optimal energy levels and endurance. Drink fluids like water, carbonated water, milk, tea, or coffee throughout the day. Aiming for a hydration level that reflects a clear, lemonade-colored first pee after waking up.

**Set Small Hydration Goals**

Aim for approximately 2 to 2.5 litres of water per day, adjusting based on individual factors such as activity level, climate, and personal hydration needs.

**1****Set up prompts to remind you to drink**

Use your phone or watch to set alarms or mark your water bottle to hit targets throughout the day.

**2****Keep fluids visible**

Out of sight usually means out of mind. Keep a water bottle at your desk or in your car.

**3****Train the body**

Work up gradually to reduce frequent trips to the bathroom.

**4****Drink with meals and snacks**

The natural electrolytes in food will help you retain fluid better.

**5****Add variety**

All fluids count toward hydration. Try adding flavour to your water (lemon, mint, berries, cucumber).

**Myth Buster:**

Contrary to popular belief, moderate coffee consumption does not necessarily lead to dehydration. Coffee can contribute to overall fluid intake and hydration, making it a suitable beverage choice within recommended limits. However, balance is key, and excessive caffeine intake should be avoided.