



Stressed Out? An Athletes Guide to Coping Skills & Strategies



A Mental Skills Workbook for Athletes & Performers



Hi, I'm Demi Agai by -

a Mental Performance Consultant & founding director of Beyond Horizons Performance (BHP). Through BHP, I'm committed to embedding psychological skills training and mental wellness across athletic and artistic spaces.

Let's build confidence, mental toughness, and resilience together!



Whether you feel like there's so much to do and not enough time, or are preoccupied with a certain issue, we've all been in scenarios where we are in over our head. In this workbook, you'll discover different types of coping strategies to help you manage any and every stressful event.



a) The Psychology of Stress

When you're met with a scenario, your brain answers the following questions in a 2-step process to determine how it should respond:

Step 1 "Is this a problem?"

- » Is this **irrelevant?** - It doesn't effect you or your well being.
- » Is this **positive?** - The situation will somehow benefit your well-being.
- » Is this **stressful?** - This could result in harm or loss and is a threat or challenge to your personal well-being.



If your brain realizes that the situation is **STRESSFUL** or can potentially bring harm to your well-being, it goes on to step 2.

Step 2 "Can I cope?"

In step 2, your brain is looking for ways to manage or cope with the stressor at hand.

When it comes to coping skills, more is better!

To help give you more coping strategies, we'll explore 3 different coping mechanisms: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and appraisal-focused coping.

b) Coping Strategies

Problem Focused Coping



is a problem-solving technique where you're facing the stressor head-on with the intention of alleviating it or eliminating it altogether.


- » BEST used when the stress/situation is in your control.

EXAMPLE



Stressor: Feeling overwhelmed from tasks, assignments and obligations.

➤ **Strategy:** Prioritize tasks, roles and responsibilities. This might mean you have to set boundaries and say “no” to certain events, people, etc.

 What are some problem-focused coping strategies you can use to help you reduce/eliminate the stressor directly:



Emotion Focused Coping

involves **managing your feelings** about the event instead of trying to change the event itself.


» BEST used when the stress/situation is out of your control.

EXAMPLE



Stressor: Receiving bad news that will impact your ability to play in the next game.

➤ **Strategy:** Making a phone call to someone for your support system (parent, friend, etc.) and listening to your favorite music.

 What are some emotion-focused strategies you can use to help you manage your emotions about a situation?



Appraisal Focused Coping

occurs when you change **the way you think** about a situation.

» These strategies include changing self-talk and re-framing or rationalizing the situation.

EXAMPLE

Stressor: Making a mistake at a clutch moment that ended up costing the game.

- ▶ **Strategy:** Embrace the fact that everyone makes mistakes and that there were several reasons as to why the team didn't win the game - it didn't just come down to a single moment or single player.



What are some appraisal-focused coping strategies you can use to help change the way you think about a situation?



Maladaptive Forms of Coping

Maladaptive coping strategies are certain behavior patterns we unconsciously resort to because they feel good in the moment, and help us temporarily avoid the stress.



The more aware you are of those habits that are actually harmful, the more likely you are to replace them with helpful coping strategies!



Circle the maladaptive coping methods you tend to rely on for temporarily relief:

Rumination/Over-Thinking

Procrastination

Leaving the Space/Situation
Entirely

Self-Criticism

Ignoring
Family/Friends

Over-Eating

Substance Abuse

Numb/Mentally
Disengage

Avoiding Emotions

Casting Blame

Did you find this helpful?

Schedule your free discovery call [HERE](#) to dive more into how you can manage your performance anxiety & rise to any occasion that comes your way!

