

CHALK TALK

DEC 2021

KYRA SIGNS
SJSU

**COMPETITION
CALENDAR**

COACHES CORNER

Lisa Pattison

GET PYSCHED!

Doc Ali's Mental Preparation
for Competition Countdown



TEAM CGC

2022 WOMEN'S COMPETITIVE CALENDAR

Team CGC Mock Meet

- January 16th
- Schedule TBC
- Level 7-10 + Aspire + High Performance

Exelta Cup

1st Trials to Canadian Championships

- February 4th-6th
- Red Deer, AB
- Schedule TBC
- Level 7-10 + Aspire

Elite Canada

- February 9th-13th
- Dates, Location, and Schedule TBC
- High Performance

Team CGC Competition | SDP Testing #2

- February 27th
- Schedule TBD
- Developmental & Competitive Athletes

Salto Gymnastics Challenge

- March 10th-13th
- Edmonton, AB
- Schedule TBC
- Athletes TBD

Trials To Westerns

2nd Trials to Canadian Championships

- March 25th-27th
- Wetaskiwin, AB
- Schedule TBC
- Level 7-10 + Aspire

Provincial Championships

3rd Trials to Canadian Championships

- April 8th-10th
- Edmonton, AB
- Schedule TBC
- Level 7-10 + Aspire + High Performance

Western Canadian Championships

- April 21st-24th
- Winnipeg, MB
- Schedule TBC
- Team Alberta Members Level 8-10 + Aspire

Canmore Summit Invitational

- May 5TH-8TH
- Canmore, AB
- Schedule TBC
- Athletes TBD

Canadian Championships

- Dates, Location, and Schedule TBC
- Team Alberta Members 9-10 + High Performance

Ogopogo Invitational

- June 3rd-5th
- West Kelowna, BC
- Schedule TBC
- Athletes TBD

Spring Fling | SDP Testing #3

- June 12th
- Schedule TBD
- Developmental Athletes

****PLEASE NOTE THIS CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PARTICIPATION IN ANY COMPETITION WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON ATHLETE HEALTH AND READINESS****

TECHNICAL TRAILS #4



SDP TESTING #1





SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Kyra Cato

CT: TELL US ABOUT YOUR GYMNASTICS JOURNEY UP TO NOW

KC: I started gymnastics when I was 3 years old, and didn't actually join competitive gymnastics until I was eight. I was just a ball of energy excited to show off my skills and that's when people started to notice me. Every opportunity sent my way was thrilling as it was another chance to perform for people around me. My goal going into competitions in the beginning was to make a judge smile at some point in my routines. When I was put on the national team at 12 years old, I really started to go places, in the world and in my career. I've been blessed with the opportunity to work with many coaches and judges over the years as well as travel to amazing places with my teammates wearing the maple leaf. Now after 6 years of elite gymnastics I achieved a goal that has opened a new chapter for me. On November 10th, I signed my letter of intent to go to San Jose University to join a wonderful team of young women.

CT: LET'S TAKE A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE, WHAT ARE YOUR BEST MEMORIES FROM YOUR TIME AT CGC?

KC: Anytime we have travelled together I always have the most fun with the girls.

CT: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ON THE CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM, AND WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE EXPERIENCE REPRESENTING OUR COUNTRY?

KC: I've been on the Canadian national team for about 5 years now and one of my favourite experiences was when I travelled to Portugal. From the beautiful scenery to the competition, everything had me in awe. It would definitely be a place I'd move to when I'm older. The competition itself was super fun and exciting. I remember meeting so many talented gymnasts and although we didn't speak the same language, we were all cheering each other on. I ended up winning beam, getting third on bars, and getting second all around. I was super happy with the results and couldn't wait to get back into training so I could have more chances at unique experiences just like that.

CT: HOW WOULD YOUR COACHES AND TEAMMATES DESCRIBE YOU?

KC: I think my teammates would describe me as being a positive and caring teammate. I can be very goofy and funny at times but when someone's struggling with a skill or even just a frustrated mindset, I never hesitate to lend a hand.

CT: WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU'VE HAD TO OVERCOME DURING YOUR GYMNASTICS CAREER SO FAR, AND HOW DID YOU GET PAST IT?

KC: In my earlier years of elite gymnastics, I suffered from a lot of ankle injuries that had kept me out of the gym for months at a time. During this time in my career, I was constantly trying to upgrade my routines so I could have even harder routines to show off at competitions, but each time I sprained my ankles it felt like a major setback in that process. I lost count of the number of times I hurt my ankle but I do know that each time I would bounce back just as strong as before. Each time I got hurt I would do what every other athlete would do, go to physio and wrap my ankles. For me even though it was frustrating to not be able to go into the gym and start doing all of my hard skills I knew that recovery was the most important thing to focus on. It wasn't an easy process and it was definitely a struggle even after the ankles had healed to make sure it wouldn't happen again. Which is why I still make sure that I warm them up properly before I train and that I wrap my ankles in order to remind myself to be aware of them so I can keep on doing what I love.

CT: WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF YOUNG GYMNASTS?

KC: Advice I'd give to younger generations is to have fun with gymnastics and trust yourself. Enjoy learning a new skill, as frustrating as it might be sometimes it just makes it all that more worthwhile when you finally get it. Focus on the positives in your journey. There will always be ups and downs and changes that may make you feel uncomfortable but it's like that for everyone. The best things come from stepping outside of your comfort zone. There were countless times where I would have to step out of my comfort zone, and let me tell you. I did not like it. Like trying a new skill on a beam without mats for the first time, it made me feel as if I was a thousand feet in the air. But after taking a deep breath and trusting myself I was able to do it. Every single one of you guys are capable of great things if you'll allow yourself to get uncomfortable. It's how you gain confidence in yourself. That way when life throws you obstacles you know that you can overcome them.

CT: TALK ABOUT YOUR DREAMS AND GOALS FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS

KC: In the next few years I hope to see myself contributing to the amazing team in San Jose as well as really figuring out who I want to be. I hope that I can do great things with my major in social work as I love learning about how I can help others. I'm excited to experience college life as a student athlete. Basically, over the next few years I hope to keep up good grades and enjoy gymnastics to the fullest with a wonderful team.

CT: HOW DID YOU AND YOUR TEAMMATES, TOGETHER WITH YOUR COACHES, SUPPORT EACH OTHER DURING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 TRAINING

KC: Covid has been really hard on everyone at the gym over these past few years but even so I think we've done an amazing job at keeping up everyone's spirit. During the lockdowns we had zoom workouts planned by Janna and Lisa. I personally really enjoyed them and I think it was a good way to reconnect during times where most of us felt isolated. I know I sure felt that way because the gym has always been my happy place. Although some days it was hard to get up and join the call Janna and Lisa always found ways to make it fun by playing games that would get everyone going. It has been a super tough past two years but I think the fact that we all were in this together made it just a little bit easier to keep going.

CT: OFF THE GYM FLOOR, ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL MOMENTS SHARED WITH YOUR TEAMMATES YOU'LL TRULY CHERISH?

KC: The girls at the gym are like my second family. My favourite moments are when we used to travel together. Sitting next to them on flights or even rooming with them has always led to some pretty funny and memorable stories. Even though we were all stressed out about competing we would still have the most fun playing around the hotel rooms, having a movie night or all collectively struggling to do our homework together (that we never really got done).

CT: HOW DO YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE IMPROVING AS AN ATHLETE AS YOU TRANSITION FROM YOUR ELITE CAREER INTO NCAA?

KC: I will continue to do as I've always done. Enjoy the sport to the fullest and have fun performing, only this time it will be for my team. I have never been the perfect athlete; every day I take steps forward and sometimes I take a step back. My plan to continue to improve is all about confidence and execution. I'm getting past my awkward teenage years and I think as I grow more into myself my gymnastics will improve as well.

CT: WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY?

KC: The first thing that drew me to San Jose was the diversity, as a woman of colour there were quite a few universities in the states that my parents didn't feel comfortable sending me to. As unfortunate as it sounds it is the reality for me. I did quite a lot of research on the universities that I wanted to attend. Not only did San Jose have an amazing team full of amazing gymnasts but they were all wonderful people. Covid did make things very difficult for me to be able to really get a sense of the atmosphere there, and the coaches down there understood that. So, they set up loads of facetime calls with the girls and the coaches so I could get to know them as well as me. After talking to them I just knew that it could definitely be a place I could call home. I knew it was a team that I would have so much fun contributing to and a place that could truly be myself without judgment.

CT: WHICH PROGRAM WILL YOU BE STUDYING, AND DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS FOR YOUR FUTURE CAREER PATH?

KC: My first choice as a major was social work and my second choice was child brain development in preparation for teaching. This path has always felt like a natural calling for me. I've been saying for years that social work has interested me most and now I'm beyond excited to learn about how to help others in their everyday lives. Specifically, I would like to enter an area that works with kids. I know that kids are so impressionable in their younger years and that can also subject them to a lot of harm and as a kid it can be extremely difficult to communicate those feelings. I want to be able to influence them positively so they can grow to become happy and healthy functioning members of society. Whether it's through teaching or counseling I know it will be a fulfilling career.

CT: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST ABOUT BEING A SPARTAN?

KC: I'm looking forward to experiencing university life. I'm looking forward to getting even close to my teammates and supporting them. Another thing is independence. I know that by being a gymnast we already are pretty mature but I can't wait to be out on my own. I just know I'll learn so much from the girls there and it's a new chapter that I welcome with open arms.

FAVOURITE FOOD

My favourite food would definitely be crab, or any type of seafood. I grew up with family along the east coast and I remember going fishing and catching some fish or lobster that my family would later cook. It's very comforting.

HOBBY

I like to draw and paint. It doesn't really need to look great, I just enjoy letting my mind get creative. Occasionally if I find a really good book I will read, but I'm pretty picky.

COMPETITION RITUALS

I don't have any rituals that I have to do before I compete except playing some pump up music to hype me up.

WHAT'S IN YOUR GYM BAG?

Tape lots and lots of tape! Usually when I pack to leave for a competition, I have a whole separate bag for my tape. I tape my ankles every training and I tape my fingers for bars, everyone in my group calls them my witch fingers.

FAVOURITE MOVIE/SHOW

My favourite movie is for sure "The Fantastic Mr. Fox" it is a movie filled with nostalgia and it's always my go to when I don't know what to watch.

WHAT'S ON YOUR PLAYLIST?

A lot of Cavetown and Will Wood. Cavetown I've been listening to for years and he is an artist that is very dear to me. Will Wood just has some very unique work that I enjoy.

**"If you can't change it,
change your attitude"**
-Maya Angelou



ACRO SERIES
BARS
BEAM
CANDYCANE
COMPETITION
DISMOUNTS

ELF
FLIP
FLOOR
GOALS
GYMNAST
HOLIDAY
HOT COCOA

G Y
G R
V A W M
C D T A
E A G C E V
K A L L B G
O K T O Q I Z D
H E N N C O G Z
S P Z E E R O O L F
T T K M W P N C Q E
E I O N E Y Q T A T Y Q
L C N X V E A S U M O U
W F K O H O A I C X M W H B
B S I S E R R X E R B H O F
H R E T I V P D V H X O L E N Q
O J N F C Y M X S B M O S E C S
V L Z A G E T I L A T E K E E Q A U
B I A C T S G E R K G Z U M L R P H
J K D Q Y B K Z S I S E Q K Z R M I M D
L Y A X D O A B Y Y Y E D R N I P C E E
Y S I Y S N D T F B T N Y P I H I K L D S D
W T Z U N A N I J S I G R F P R A N T D X C
R V N V R O C V N C T E E Y L H P H I Z M H D D
X B U W N W K Q G U R S T O M X Q L G R N P C A
W G Y O E V F F I O U E G D A O N P U S I R W A T Z
Y R W M W Q L A R H N Z U B K M S A S R T E T Q X C
C V N B S N I A U A T R R J M E B M K S O Q N L Z Z I Y
O A P B I P B K R S F S W Y C D L P A Y T A P L S H L K
S D X B U D W T E Y E X W D E K N W Q M E S L D K P U J C N
I J V C D K L I C O M P E T I T I O N D B T H M R S L A O G

ICESKATING
IMPROVEMENT
NEWYEAR
PRESENTS
ROUTINEQUEEN
RUDOLPH
SANTA
SLEIGHRIDE
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN
SPLIT
STICKIT
TEAMMATES

CIRCLE EACH WORD YOU FIND WITH DIFFERENT COLOURS & PATTERNS TO DECORATE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE!

coaches corner

LISA PATTISON

CT: TELL US A BIT ABOUT HOW YOU GOT INVOLVED WITH THE SPORT, AND YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A GYMNAST?

LP: MY PARENTS HEARD GYMNASTICS WAS A GREAT FOUNDATIONAL SPORT & NEEDED AN OUTLET FOR THEIR 3 YEAR OLD'S EXTRA ENERGY. IT WAS LOVE FROM THE BEGINNING & I WORKED MY WAY UP TO REPRESENT SASKATCHEWAN AT MY FIRST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS WHEN I WAS 11 YEARS OLD. I SPENT 4 YEARS ON THE CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM IN BOTH NOVICE & JUNIOR & REPRESENTED CANADA AT MEETS IN SLOVENIA, AUSTRALIA, & THE JR. PAN AMERICAN GAMES IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

CT: WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT COACHING?

LP: I LOVE HELPING ATHLETES ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS; INCLUDING IMPROVING TECHNIQUE/QUALITY, ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS & PERFORMING THEIR BEST IN COMPETITION.

CT: HOW DO YOU USE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES AS A NATIONAL TEAM GYMNAST TO ENCOURAGE YOUR GYMNASTS WHEN THEY ARE MOVING THROUGH THE RANKINGS?

LP: UNDERSTANDING THE AMOUNT OF TIME, ENERGY & SACRIFICE REQUIRED TO BE A HIGH LEVEL, ATHLETE HELPS ME RELATE TO THE GYMNASTS & SHARE SOME OF MY PERSONAL STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH THESE FACTORS.

CT: HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

LP: MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY IS TO BUILD MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY & EMOTIONALLY STRONG ATHLETES & HUMAN BEINGS

CT: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE MOST ATHLETES ARE FACING TODAY, AND WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES THEY CAN USE TO OVERCOME THEIR STRUGGLES?

LP: EACH ATHLETE FACES INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES. I WOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO FIND PEOPLE THEY TRUST TO SHARE THESE WITH & SUPPORT THEM THROUGH IT.

CT: WHAT ARE YOUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS THUS FAR AS A COACH?

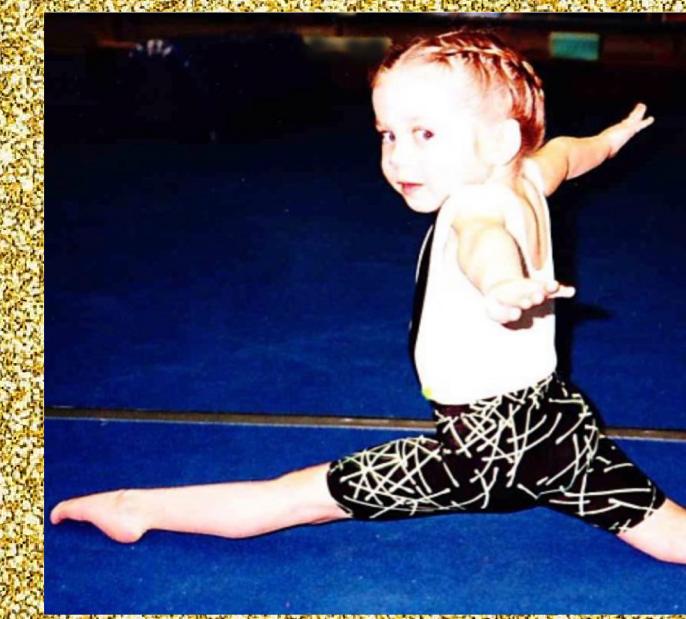
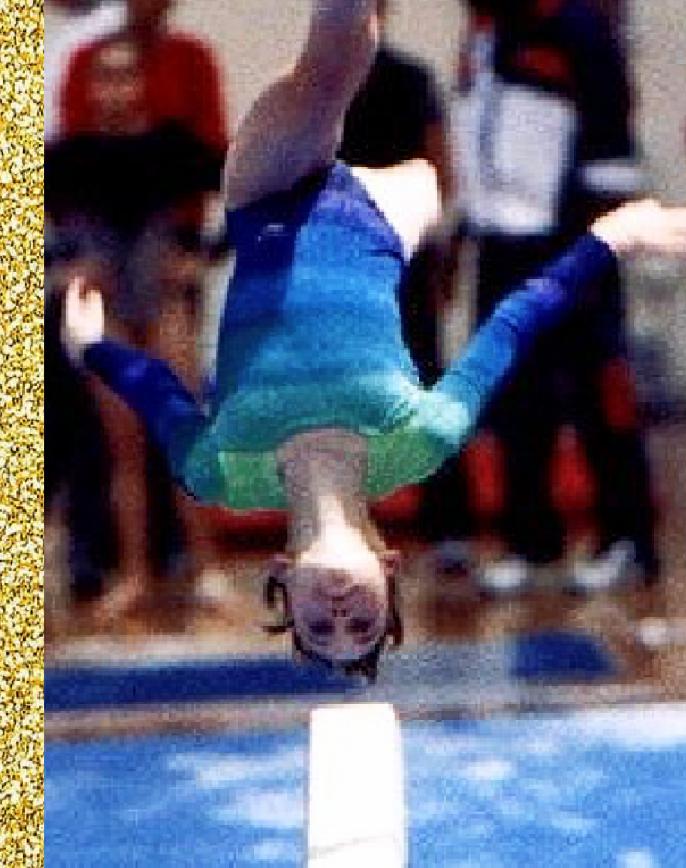
LP: HAVING MY ATHLETES PERFORM CONSISTENT, BEAUTIFUL ROUTINES & ACHIEVE THEIR PERFORMANCE GOALS IN COMPETITION INCLUDING PREPARING MY JUNIOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE ATHLETE TO WIN BARS AT ELITE CANADA & BE NAMED TO REPRESENT CANADA AT GYMIX 2020.

CT: HOW DO YOU ENJOY LIVING IN CALGARY? WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT THE CITY?

LP: I LOVE CALGARY SO FAR, IT REMINDS ME OF A REALLY BIG SASKATOON. THE RIVER IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT THE CITY IS THE CRAFT BREWERIES!!

CT: WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE UPCOMING COMPETITIVE SEASON?

LP: SHARING OUR HARD WORK WITH OTHERS & RECONNECTING WITH FRIENDS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



FINISH THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES

THE GREATEST THING I CAN DO FOR ALL MY ATHLETES IS... ENCOURAGE THEM TO BE THEIR BEST SELVES!

A GOOD COACH WILL ALWAYS... CONTINUE LEARNING & APPLYING CREATIVE IDEAS.

A GREAT ATHLETE WILL ALWAYS... TRY THEIR HARDEST & COMMUNICATE THEIR NEEDS.

I'M A GOOD COACH BECAUSE... I AM PATIENT, DETAILED & VALUE LONG TERM GOALS OVER SHORT TERM OUTCOMES.

AN ESSENTIAL QUALITY TO BE A GREAT CHAMPION IS... THE ABILITY TO REFLECT ON & BOUNCE BACK FROM MISTAKES.

►►► FUN FACTS ◄◄◄

HOMETOWN
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

FAVOURITE EVENT TO COMPETE
BEAM

FAVOURITE EVENT TO COACH
BARS & BEAM

GUILTY PLEASURE?
CHOCOLATE & BEER

FAVOURITE BOOK OR MOVIE
HARRY POTTER (THE BOOKS)

ALL-TIME FAVOURITE GYMNAST
LARISA IORDACHE (ROMANIA) & KATE RICHARDSON (CANADA)

CHOOSE 3 WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOURSELF
ORGANIZED, DEDICATED & SASSY

FAVOURITE TRAVEL DESTINATION
SWITZERLAND & BELGIUM

GET PSYCHED!

It's very simple...

You compete how you train.

If you train well, you compete well.

It's not about who's lucky, it's about who's prepared.

It's that time of year again.

Time to tighten up your grips,

put that first half with the second half,

stick those dismounts & get ready to shine!

It's meet season.

Doc Ali's

Mental Preparation for Competition Countdown

This article will give you six basic steps to get your mind ready for competition.

Count back six weeks from your first meet, and do one exercise each week. These exercises will help you tighten your mind to perform your best!

Ready? Here we go!



Countdown to Competition Week #6: Creating the Vision

To begin this process, it is very important you create the Vision of the gymnast you want to be in competition. This is your goal at the end of the six weeks when you are standing there getting ready to compete. What do you look like? How are you acting in the gym? What do you do on a good day? A bad day? How focused and aggressive are you during workout and competitions? I call this your “Vision” with a capital “V”. It is your perfect image of how you want to compete. Here are some examples or words other gymnasts have used to describe their Vision: motivated, strong, a team player, fun, aggressive, fearless, doubtless, positive, a leader, confident, determined, consistent, and happy. We know that the mind is the creator of all things. Everything in the world starts with a vision. Your Vision will help guide you for the next six weeks. Keep this image close to you. Remind yourself of your Vision every day.

Exercise: Creating the Vision On a piece of paper, write as many words as you can that describe your Ideal Vision for Competition. Hang this poster up in your room or locker to remind yourself of the gymnast you want to be every day!

Countdown to Competition Week #5: Mental Choreography

The next two weeks are very important. Remember, out of control thinking leads to out of control performance. Mental choreography is your key to confident, consistent routines. When you use cue words throughout your routines, your mind stays focused and tight leaving no room for negative beast thoughts. It is just as important to choreograph thoughts as it is to choreograph a floor or beam routine. Do you go out and compete on floor without your floor routine being choreographed? No. Do you go out and compete beam without a beam routine? No. But most of us have no idea what we should be thinking when we are working out or competing. That’s why we do mental choreography. Have you ever watched Amanda Borden before she competes? What does she do? SHE TALKS TO HERSELF! She’s doing her mental choreography. Do you think she is saying to herself, “I hope I make this. I hope I don’t crash.” Nope probably not. What she is doing is visualizing her routines and saying to herself, “Relax, I can do this!”. We know that the biggest cause of negative performance or balking is out of control thinking. You need disciplined thoughts increasing consistency, and concentration. Constructing positive mental choreography is one of the first things you can do to create mental toughness.

There are three types of thoughts that you want to use in mental choreography.

Mechanical Statements: Statements reminding you of a physical or mechanical technique (Key Words) (i.e. “lift then twist”, “higher arms”, and “breathe”)

Energy Statements: Statements that evoke an emotional response (i.e. “GO!”, “Push here!”, and “Relax”)

Self-esteem Statements: Statements that encourage self-confidence (i.e. “I can do it”, “I’ve done it before”, “This is easy”, and “Be the best I can be”)

Use these statements to choreograph your routines and individual tricks as well.

Exercise: Mental Choreography

On a big piece of paper, write out each of your routines. For floor and beam, you can draw your pattern and write the skills you are doing on the pattern line. Then, above the line, write out every thought you want to be thinking during your routine. For uneven bars, parallel bars, high bar, rings, and pommel horse, write a list of your skills and the thoughts you want to be thinking on each skill. For vault, write what you are thinking before you run, during your run, and during your vault. You may not have mental choreography during every skill. But remember, the more your mind is busy, the less you will be distracted. Practice your mental choreography by doing mental “walk throughs” until it comes automatically. You want your mental choreography to happen naturally without thinking. This helps you get into the zone.

Countdown to Competition Week #4: Edit Mental Choreography

Our minds can easily drift when we are not 100% focused. Now that you have started to become comfortable with mental choreography, take some time to reassess your statements and make any changes that will benefit you. (ie, change statements, change environment for walk throughs)

Countdown to Competition Week #3: Mental Rehearsal Schedule

Consistent visualization is an important part of any mental toughness training program. Visualizing yourself doing perfect routines helps build confidence and consistency. The most important by-product of mental rehearsal is the pairing of cue words (Mental Choreography) to perfect performance. Many research studies have shown the connection between visualization and improved performance. Research findings support athletes can experience almost as much improvement through mental rehearsal as they do with physical practice, giving they are in equal physical condition. When you do mental rehearsal, it's important to see yourself with as much detail as possible. Try to use all five senses. See the gym and equipment. Hear the sounds of the competition. Smell the smell of chalk. Taste your mouth being dry or notice sweat on your lips. Feel what it feels like to be at the competition. The closer you can simulate competition in your mind, the more you will be mentally prepared. A mental rehearsal schedule can be done at any time during the day, although most find it more helpful before they go to bed at night. This is when the body is most relaxed and open to suggestion. Always be sure you include mental choreography in all mental rehearsal. This links cue words to perfect performance.

Exercise: Mental Rehearsal Schedule

Write each day of the week on a piece of paper and create your mental rehearsal schedule. Include some skills and some routines. Be sure to give yourself at least one night off that can also be for make-up. The night before a competition, do one of each event (with all mental choreography) in competition attire. Don't give yourself too many routines. Make your mental rehearsal schedule realistic, if you can only do one before you fall asleep, that's fine!

Countdown to Competition Week #2: “One-Point”

One-Point Training The “One-Point” is my term for a state of mental focus without distraction. It is simply being in the present, without dwelling in past (what happened) or future (what if) thoughts. Just as the perfect body position or shape makes the skill a lot easier, the “tight mind” creates confidence and consistency. Learning to control your mind and pull it back when it gets off track is a skill. Many times, it feels like our emotions control us, when in actuality we control our emotions. Learn how to bring your mind back to “one point” first by identifying what your one point feels like. What do you feel like when you are totally doubtless in competition? When you are not thinking about what happened in warm-ups or what could happen if you mess us.

Visualize yourself on your one-point. Then, practice bringing yourself back to one-point whenever you lose focus. Bring yourself back with a word and a breath. This is called your “one-point anchor”. It is the cue that brings your mind back to focus whenever you feel distracted, frustrated, nervous, or upset. Practice getting back to one-point by visualizing a bad day, and see yourself turn it around in your mind by changing your thinking. Practice turning negative thoughts around workouts. This will train your mind BEFORE your need to use it in competition.

Exercise: The One-Point

Create your one-point anchor. It could be as simple as a breath and a phrase. For example, “Stop, breathe, make it happen” or “Breathe, relax, back to one-point”. Practice this in the gym whenever you feel out of your zone.

Countdown to Competition Week #1: Pre-Competition Rituals and Elite Attitude

Here we are. One week before the meet. It is crucial you are mentally focused just prior to competition. Too many times fear, stress, and pressure, shake up your confidence right before the judge raises his or her hand. Your goal is to get yourself into your Ideal Vision State. That is, you feel confident, focused, excited, and ready to hit your routines. Your pre-competition ritual is what you are saying to yourself and doing beginning two people before you are up. It’s important to choreography two people before you compete, one person before you compete, while you are waiting for the judge, and right before your mount, run, or music. Elements in your pre-competition ritual could include, visualization, positive self-talk, breathing, timers, arm sets, dance throughs, and drills. Practice your pre-competition ritual in workout at least one week before the meet. This is also the week for fine tuning. Elite Attitude is that attention to detail that is needed to perform your best. This week, focus on landings, finishes, facial expression during floor, and acting confident and solid even if you don’t feel that way all the time! You know the saying “fake it ‘til you make it”? This is the time to project confidence even on your most frustrating day. When you go out on the floor in workout and competition, project an image of confidence, readiness, and doubtlessness!

Exercise: Pre-Competition Ritual

On a piece of paper, write out your pre-competition ritual for every event. Be sure to include two people before you compete, one person before you compete, while you are waiting for the judge, and before your mount, run, or music. Practice Elite Attitude all week. Pay special attention to landings, finishes, facial expressions, and how you handle frustration. These tools will help you feel confident and train your mind in order to compete your best. Remember, the key on competition day is letting go and having fun. On the day of the meet, know you have prepared as much as you can and go into the meet with an air of confidence and excitement. You’ve worked hard, now is the time to let it shine. Good luck, and most importantly, have fun.

Alison Arnold Ph.D. is a mental toughness coach for Head Games. A former gymnast, she views training the mind as important as training the body.

Healthier Soft Gingerbread Cookies

These soft gingerbread cookies use almond butter to replace most of the butter, wheat flour for a few extra nutrients, and applesauce to keep them soft.

- Prep Time: 1 hour 25 minutes
- Cook Time: 8 minutes
- Yields: 25 to 35

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- cup molasses
- cup almond butter
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons applesauce
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- teaspoon kosher salt
- teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- cup wheat flour
- Turbinado sugar (for garnish)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, add egg, brown sugar, molasses, almond butter, melted butter, and applesauce; vigorously whisk to thoroughly combine.
2. To the wet ingredients, stir in ground ginger, cinnamon, allspice, kosher salt, baking soda, flour, and wheat flour until well combined. Turn out onto plastic wrap and form into a rough ball; cover with plastic wrap and chill at least 1 hour, or overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F.
4. Flour a flat surface and a rolling pin, then roll out the dough -inch thick. Use a cookie cutter to cut out gingerbread men, about 25–35 total. Place gingerbread men on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
5. Bake about 8 minutes, until puffed and slightly firmed. Let rest on the pan for 2 to 3 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack. Store covered at room temperature for several days or freeze for several months.



Happy Holidays from
everyone at CGC!
We hope your holidays
will be filled with joy and
laughter through the
New Year