Mental Training Manual For Archery
Eight Principles of Attentional Control Training (ACT)

1. Athletes need to be able to engage in four types of attention (broad external, narrow internal, narrow external and broad internal).

2. Different archery situations will make different attentional demands on an athlete. Therefore, the athlete must be able to shift to the appropriate type of concentration to match changing attentional demands.

3. Under optimal conditions, the average person can meet concentration demands of a wide variety of performance situations.

4. Attentional characteristics are at times trait-like, having predictive validity in any number of situations. At other times, they are state-like, situational determined and modified through training.

5. The individual's ability to perform effectively as the dominant concentration style becomes more trait-like depends on two factors:
   a.) the appropriateness of the dominant attentional style
   b.) the level of confidence within the particular performance situation.

6. The phenomenon of choking (having performance progressively deteriorate) occurs as physiological arousal increases, causing attention to involuntarily narrow and become more internally focused.

7. Alterations in physiological arousal affect concentration. Thus, systematic manipulation of physiological arousal is one way of gaining some control over concentration.

8. Alterations in the focus of attention affect physiological arousal. Thus the systematic manipulation of concentration is on way to gain some control over arousal (e.g., muscular tension levels, heart rate, and respiration rate).
Ways to Improve Concentration for Archery

1. Stay in the present moment and keep positive — Stay in the present and do not focus on what happened with the last shot or what may happen with the next shot.

2. Concentrate on what you need to do, not what to avoid — Do not wander to past errors or the future.

3. Know the attentional demands of Archery — In addition to being aware of the attention needed for your sport; also be aware of the relevant cues needed to perform well.

4. Focus on the things you can control — You cannot control situations and obstacles, but you can control your emotions, reactions, and thoughts. Make sure you realize that there are many things that are going to be out of your control, but make the best of it and focus on what you can control.

5. Counting breaths (relaxation exercises) — You can help improve your focus by counting "In, one"; "Out, two."

6. Cues — Use cues to create appropriate associations and use them to serve as triggers for proper action in your sport.
Mental Fitness Programme

Your body automatically functions more efficiently when it gets regular exercise, and the same applies to concentration. A conscious effort to improve your concentration for a few minutes each day produces a mind far better able to cope with all kinds of activities.

Also, physical exercise is an effective way of counteracting the anxiety that can disrupt your concentration. Allowing time for this should not be viewed guiltily; half an hour's brisk walk can release tensions that might waste hours of your time by ruining your ability to focus. Good ventilation once you are indoors again is another essential, and reduces that all-too-common desire to fall asleep!

Breathe Easy

Concentration is often easier when your body is relaxed. Controlled breathing helps to achieve this state, because the muscular tension that tight breathing causes can often disturb your mental calm. Breathing exercises also provide the perfect opportunity to practise concentration skills. Breathe out your unease, and breathe in comfort to fill yourself with the positive attitude that will help you to get down to work. Claiming that you would love to improve your concentration but don't have the time is no excuse — use the time spent waiting for a bus, cooking dinner or attending a conference to develop your breathing technique. Try to maintain a slower, deeper breathing pattern, concentrating on the physical sensations that this brings. This will ease you into a more tranquil state and so rid your mind of all kinds of unnecessary clutter.

Fatigue, aching limbs and hunger can also serve as physical distractions. Giving into the demands of your body will help to set your mind at ease. If you work all day, and party all night, it's no wonder that your attention wanders! Taking regular physical exercise will also improve your physical well-being and breathing patterns and satisfy any excess physical energy you have — which can often make you feel restless while working. Correct and efficient breathing would seem to be a crucial aspect of effective performance in Archery. Breath control can lead to keeping you in the present moment throughout a competition.
Mental Skills Training Archery

Mental training should never be limited to one set of rules. Cultural and learning differences will dictate the need for different practices and several techniques to converge to meet the needs of each individual. Though we share the same mind, our uniqueness will require that we arrive at our potential from different means and directions.

Mental training is less about what talents and abilities we possess and more about how we access them and how much of them we fail to tap in to. The creative abilities and the athletic talents that we have are often hidden by the left-brain and its mental congestion. The resources of our right brain are unlimited but these creative and natural resource of the "original mind" often seem to be elusive, hidden, and not accessible when we need them.

There are 4 progressions to tapping in to our right brain resources.
1. Remove the obstacles of over thinking, congestion and distraction so we can access our natural resources.
2. Learn to inactively clear the mind through meditation.
3. Learn to actively clear the mind through discipline.
4. Learn to access our natural resources on a consistent basis.

The mental training process is a twin track approach. Firstly, like the sculpture remove the pieces of stone to reveal the beauty of the sculpture. This process is referred to as S.E.D. Simplify everything. Eliminate the unnecessary. De-clutter your life. This involves the clearing of the mind and creating clarity of perception. Secondly, paint a new picture by changing the muscle memory in our brain. This will lead to increased accuracy of response to the things we deal with.

Mental training incorporates many of the same principles as meditation but whereas meditation is based on inaction, mental training uses both inaction and action. Whereas meditation has one goal; to clear the mind and simple "be", mental training has two goals; to clear the mind and subsequently through various exercises, enhance it so that your performance in Archery will improve.

Mental training like meditation takes practice and like meditation one can never say I've mastered it", and don't need to practice anymore. Like physical fitness, if you
don't work at it you will lose it. It's necessary to spend 20 minutes a day on at least one of meditation or mental training but preferable both.

Public time is a term used to describe the time you spend during every day work and living things like eating, working, playing, worrying, wondering, sleeping, etc. Public time is neither good nor bad, it's both. Private time is a term to describe time set aside to let go of all internal doubts, fears and worry and all external demands, concerns and responsibilities. It is time set aside to work on ourselves and in particular to work on metal preparation for Archery.
The Key Principles of Mental Training

1. Foundation. Mental training is a cumulative process. You must master each step before moving onto the next. Being goal orientated means you may rush things and this will lead to a lack of success which is directly related to the strength of your foundation.

2. Commitment. Most practices are dropped in the early stages because people are looking for quick results and instant gratification and if they don't get them they quit. To get the greatest benefits from mental training you must be prepared to climb the mountain to see the valley below. This means looking past the short-term gains to get the long-term results.

3. Process. The mental training process has 8 stages. The first stage is about learning to be still and in the right frame of mind. The next 3 stages are intended to put the mind and body in a deep state of relaxation. This is the inactive or Relaxation phase. The last 4 stages are designed to enhance the mind. This is the active or Enhancement phase. Each of the 8 stages has its own exercise and each must be mastered before moving on to the next.

Stillness Phase
1. Frame of mind

Relaxation Phase
2. Exaggerated deep breaths
3. Exaggerated deep breaths/Auto suggestion

Enhancement Phase
4. Imagery — sports environment

Although described in stages, once mastered it will flow naturally like one movement. There is also a degree of variety, which keeps the practice enjoyable.

Stage 1: Frame of Mind
Prior to training an archer will warm-up. It's a principle of training. Prior to a competition an archer will go through their pre-shoot preparation. Prior to mental training an archer will have to get in the right frame of mind. It's the equivalent to a mental warm-up and it means moving from your public time to you private time. Without being able to make the transition to the frame of mind that's necessary, an archer will carry aspects of their public time state of mind into practice of competition.

Exercise for Frame of Mind: Sit in a comfortable position and place and tell yourself that everything that happened before this exercise and everything that will
happen after the exercise does not concern you; you will deal with all those issues when they arise but for now you only want to be in the present moment. Put all your thoughts aside and channel your energy into the here and now. Tell yourself that this is your opportunity to strengthen your inner self, while in your private time. Focus on your breathing. Follow each breath in and out of your body and observe its pace for as long as you can without any thoughts arising in the mind. If thoughts enter your head and you become distracted, simply and gently bring your attention back to your breathing. Use your breathing to bring and keep you in your private time for at least 5 minutes. Remember if you cannot effectively do this exercise twice a day the effectiveness of the other stages of mental training will be diminished.

Stage 2: Deep Breathing
Diaphragmatic breathing, the type recommended in this programme serves a dual purpose. Just as breathing is a fundamental part of meditation, at this stage it helps the relaxation process and also signals the beginning and ending of the mental training programme. Breathing is a constant measure from moment to moment of one's state of being and state of mind. When a competition comes down to its crucial point, the archer who prevails is most likely to be the one whose breathing is calm and composed. In eastern cultures, the control and pace of one's breathing is of central importance. It is the balance point in a performance and if it is out of control then so to is the performer.

Exercise for Deep Breathing
Begin by taking a few minutes to take yourself into your private time and your frame of mind for mental training. Now observe the manner and pace of your breathing. Bring your attention to your diaphragm or stomach area. Sit comfortable in a straight-backed chair and breath in through your nose and allowing your stomach to soften and gently expand at its own pace. Imagine your stomach is inflating like a balloon. Keep your shoulders cemented in place without and physical effort. Only allow your chest cavity to expand after your diaphragm has begun to expand. The inhalation phase should be done with minimum effort but very deliberately. As the diaphragm fills with air, hold it for a long pause and then release the breath through the nose, deliberately, proportionally and calmly. There should be as much air dispensed at the beginning as at the end of the exhalation phase.
This deep or exaggerated breathing technique teaches the body to measure the breath and the mind becomes impressioned by it. Take 5 deep breaths as an entry point
and then allow you're breathing to return to its normal pace and simple observe it for 5 minutes. Finish by taking another 5 breaths at the end of the mental training to mark the exit point.

Stage 3: Autosuggestion

In this stage a word is used to suggest to the mind that it is entering training mode. The word is used in conjunction with the 5 deep breaths as an entry and another word is used with the 5 deep breaths as an exit. The opening word should be one that suggests relaxation to the mind. Words such as calm, relax, free, peaceful, release. The exit word should be one that suggests focus to the mind as this will aid in the next stage of training. The words should trigger an image or feeling in the mind that brings about a conditioned response that is appropriate to archery. This act of triggering a specific mindset is known as autosuggestion. Autosuggestion deepens the relaxation response and trigger attentional focus to where you want to direct it.