Self-regulation practices are integral to achieving or maintaining high levels of performance on & off the pitch, court or course.

An example of such practice(s) would be an athlete practicing self-regulation by controlling his or her breathing.

Essentially, when breathing is done in a deep (diaphragmatic) rhythm, the “primitive” parts of the brain (i.e., the areas involved in our fight-or-flight response) are signalled that a real or perceived threat has passed.

With the current Covid-19 related threats, stressors and general anxiety; regular breathwork can provide a mental and physical buffer to daily uncomfortable thoughts and feelings.

**BOX BREATH**

Box breathing involves exhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs empty for a four-count, inhaling at the same pace, and holding air in your lungs for a count of four before exhaling and beginning the pattern anew.

Progression: Extend each side of box by 1 second per week.

**4-7-8 BREATH (PRANAYAMA)**

“The natural tranquilizer for the nervous system”

Breathe in using your diaphragm, and on the inhale, count slowly to 4. One you reach 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds. Slowly empty your lungs for a count of 8.

Technique can be coupled with visualization of pressure moments in matches.

**SAMA VRITTI (EQUAL BREATHING)**

This breathing technique can be tailored to the individual’s experience of breathwork training (progressed, regressed).

Simply inhale and exhale on the same count; for example, inhale on a slow count of 5 with a slow exhale of 5. Repeat as many times as needed.

Technique can be used at half-time in matches or end of sets.

Further Reading:

https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321805