

The Home Business Athlete Part I: Performing Under Pressure

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A person who works from home must possess many of the mental components that pro athletes do in order to succeed. You have to have a winning attitude, a good exercise regime, and above all, you need to be able to perform once the date of the Big Event rolls around. This article is the first in a four part series we've entitled "The Home Business Athlete"; a series which focuses on the similarities between the makeup of a successful athlete and those of a person who works from home. The first article in this series will discuss preparing yourself for the big show, when it is time to perform and to perform well under pressure.

Be In Tune With Your Body

High pressure situations tend to bring out a physical reaction in all of us, and it is important to recognize when these physical reactions are taking place. You need to realize when that tension first starts to build, and take steps to alleviate it immediately (this can be quite difficult when you are trying to get focused on a task, but once you take care of the tightness, that itch, or that queasiness, the rest of the task will probably fly by).

Tools To Relax

There are several ways in which you can make your body relax and alleviate some of the tension that comes with a high pressure situation.

- 1.) Breathing is one way to calm down and refocus. Taking long, deep breaths will tell your brain that everything is fine, and trigger the chemical reactions that create a relaxed state. Counting up from one to ten and then back down ten to one as you inhale and exhale is a great way to get into this state, and it only takes from five or ten minutes to get there.
- 2.) Breaks are another great way to tell your brain to tell your body that it is time to wind down a bit. The best breaks involve some aspect of nature. For whatever reason, the presence of nature has a soothing effect upon the human psyche. Looking out a window for a time will do the trick in many cases; just viewing pictures of nature on the internet or in a photo album may also work. If even these small opportunities evade you, you can also try just closing your eyes and envisioning yourself in one of your most favorite, relaxing haunts.
- 3.) Pets are a well documented way of alleviating stress. Pick up your cat and pet her for a while, or call your dog over and scratch his ears and back. This activity has been shown to reduce blood pressure; watching your fish swim has the same effect.
- 4.) Naps are a great way to take a break from the pressure. Many people find that although they are reluctant to give themselves permission to take a nap, they wake up and produce more than they thought possible while they were feeling tired. Power naps are a great way to stay motivated during a day.

Your Environment

Working from home gives you the ability to shape your work environment in a way that is most likely to help you overcome the pressure of day to day tasks and deadlines. Certain types of music are believed to have the ability to take a person from a state of high tension to a state of relaxation in a matter of seconds, and classical music in particular is believed to focus the mind on the problems at hand. Don't be afraid of having some relaxing music playing in the background as you work, especially when the pressure is really one.

Starting your day without the jarring blare of an alarm clock is another way to keep your natural environment from adding stress to the pressures of the day. There is a reason those hellish little devices are called alarm clocks; they are designed to jar your body out of sleep by creating a panic reaction. A better way to start the day is by going to bed early enough that you can tell yourself when to wake up, which believe it or not your body will do naturally. It's a lot better to ease your way into the day in this way than it is to wake up to a simulated emergency klaxon.

Learning to cope under pressure is not only important from a business perspective, but from a personal one as well. Most of the measures used will reduce your blood pressure, making you not only less tense and better able to accomplish your tasks but will also help you avoid severe health risks such as heart disease.

The next article in this series will focus on personal training by [building up your energy](#).