

# Mental Rehearsal

Mental rehearsal is the process of visualizing yourself performing a new habit or behavior so that you're better prepared to act out that behavior in the real world.

It's a popular technique used by many professional athletes, actors, musicians, public speakers, and stage performers. A golf player visualizes their swing before hitting the ball, actors visualize their lines before getting in front of the camera, and musicians visualize how to play their instruments before performing a new song.

Research shows that visualizing yourself performing a habit activates many of the same brain regions as if you were actually doing it, so every time you mentally rehearse, you're increasing brain connections that will make the action more natural and automatic in the future.

Any habit or behavior can be practiced through mental rehearsal, including going to the gym, completing a work assignment, or even acts of kindness.

The truth is you have to be able to see yourself doing something before you can turn it into a reality. If you can't at least *picture* yourself acting a certain way, it's unlikely you ever will. The possibility needs to exist in your mind.

In this worksheet, you will learn step-by-step instructions on how you can apply mental rehearsal to any new habit you want to build in your life.

Go to the next page to begin!

**1. Choose a new habit you'd like to learn or improve. Be as specific and concrete as possible:**

---

**2. Identify a situation where you want to perform the new habit. Where are you? Who are you with? Try to pick a real-life example.**

---

**3. Imagine the situation at the beginning. Set the stage in your mind by engaging each of your senses to the best of your ability:**

What do you see?

---

What do you hear?

---

What do you smell?

---

What do you touch/feel?

---

What do you taste?

---

**4. Now close your eyes and take a moment to imagine yourself in the situation. Look around and fill in as many details as possible.**

Complete one minute “set the stage” visualization

**5. Once the stage is set, it’s time to mentally rehearse yourself performing the new habit.**

Here are helpful guidelines to keep in mind:

- Start by closing your eyes and taking 10 deep breaths to relax your mind.
- Visualize the situation with as many details as possible. Take a moment to look around and observe your surroundings in your mind’s eye. Try to engage all your senses.
- Focus on the *process*, not just the results. Imagine yourself performing each step of the new habit from the very beginning to the end.
- Conclude the rehearsal on a positive note by imagining a positive outcome or how good it will feel once you complete the habit.

**6. Complete your first mental rehearsal of your new habit.**

Complete first mental rehearsal.

## **Mental rehearsal doesn't need to take more than a few minutes.**

Our minds have the incredible ability to time travel: we can fast forward, rewind, slow down, or speed up events in our heads. This is a skill you can use to focus on key moments while rehearsing.

Think of your mind as a “movie theater” and your thoughts as the “remote control.” You can change what’s on the screen whenever you want – you can press pause and replay steps you need to work on.

## **Your imagination is a muscle that takes practice to build.**

If you have trouble with visualizing, be patient with yourself.

One simple tip for people who say, “I don’t know how to imagine,” is to imagine that you can imagine – then start from there. It’s completely fine if your first visualizations are just rough outlines of stick figures, everyone needs to start somewhere.

## **Mental rehearsal is one of the most powerful tools you can use to help change your habits and learn new behaviors.**

It isn’t magic, it’s simply using your mind as a tool to *prepare* you for new patterns of behavior. This is how successful businessmen, athletes, actors, and performers use visualization to make real world changes – and now you can too!

Congratulations! You've completed the worksheet.