

# MENTAL FITNESS

Mental fitness is like on-field fitness – it can be trained and strengthened. It helps you perform at our best, stay switched on, and connect with teammates, both on and off the field. Staying mentally fit means having the skills and strategies to manage mindset, bounce back from setbacks, and maintain wellbeing. Coaches can help players train their mental fitness just like their skills and endurance by...

## DEVELOPING GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

By consciously bringing our awareness to the here and now, we can be more focussed in our attention to connect with what matters. This can enhance performance by allowing players to notice any rising tension or unhelpful thoughts during a game or in training and redirect thoughts toward what matters.

During training or perhaps on the bench during a game, guide players through the following grounding practice, with a view that they can do this independently when needed.

### PRACTICE ONE: FEET ON THE GROUND

Shift players attention from their thoughts and worries to a physical sensation, breath or their surroundings. A simple technique is feeling your feet on the ground.

#### Ask players to:

1. Take a breath
2. Press their feet firmly into the ground and notice the contact  
What do they notice in their legs and feet when they put pressure to the ground?
3. Reconnect their body to what they notice in that moment
4. Take a breath

### PRACTICE TWO: 5 SENSES TECHNIQUE

#### Lead players in the following practice:

*Take a moment to look at your surroundings.  
Either in your head or out loud, list:*

- » 5 things you can see
- » 4 things you can feel
- » 3 things you can hear
- » 2 things you can smell
- » 1 thing you can taste

#### TIPS

1. Practice these techniques outside competition so they're automatic in-game.
2. Keep routines short and simple— 2–3 minutes max for in-game use.
3. Follow up with naming an intention or action after the grounding practice.