

YouthFirst

Parents Learning
about Youth Sports

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Arousal (getting ready for the game)

Arousal is like energizing the mind and body, with different levels, from low (deep sleep) to high (extreme excitement).

Now you be asking yourself what does this have to do with sports? Well, I will tell you?

Now it has been proved that different sports need to have different arousal levels. For example a weight lifter may need to be very aroused and feel the blood rushing through their body.

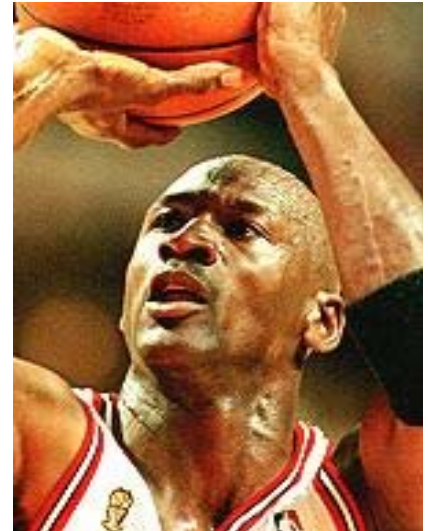
This gives them the strength needed to lift to weights over 100 pounds. An activity that uses your fine muscles, like shooting or archery, requires you to



be calm or in a low arousal state. Some sports use different levels. A distance runner needs a lower arousal rate than a sprinter who needs high arousal to run really fast in a short amount of time. But to keep in mind that to low or too high can be bad for you so you have to be careful.

As you can tell that its not one level fits all situations. So, the first step is to find out what your level of arousal is. Here are some questions to ask yourself when it comes close to game time, remember to answer truthfully:

1. What are my emotions the day before the game; what are they 8 hours before; what are they on the court or field?
2. What am I saying to myself before I go out there?
3. Rate yourself on how you feel before the game. With a scale of 1-10, with not worried as 1 to scared as 10.
4. How were you focused, were you paying attention to the game or something else?



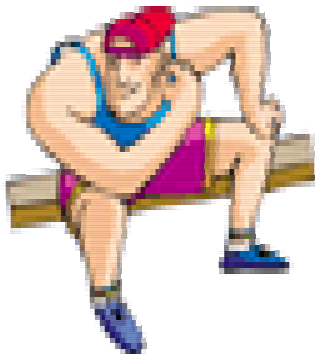
Michael Jordan is in a high aroused state in order to perform his best in every game.

Did you find anything different from your best and

worst games? More than likely you found some different levels of arousal. Which is good, it shows that you are using different levels of arousal. Now here comes the fun part of this, here are some ways to help you increase and decrease your level of arousal: To increase

1. Increase your rhythm and breathing rate.
 2. Focus on your task and don't worry about anything else.
 3. Stretch more before game time.
 4. Listen to your favorite music.
- To decrease arousal:

1. Take in big deep slow breaths.
2. Quietly tell yourself key words (calm, easy, cool).
3. Focus on your performance rather than what happens.
4. Have someone give you a back rub or massage before and after the game.



Your homework, start to write down your thoughts and self talk before, during, or even after the game. If you don't practice mental conditioning, it's not going to magically appear on game day. Also practice changing your level of arousal by using these tips and find out what level you perform best at.