AROUSAL AND ANXIETY

Arousal: Intensity level of behavior (can be anywhere from resting state, like sleeping, to extreme excitement, like screaming). It gives your body energy to do activities. However, too much arousal can result in stress or anxiety (nervousness) associated with physical activation of your body.

Inverted-U Hypothesis (Yerkes-Dodson): As arousal goes up, it reaches a point where your performance is the best. If arousal keeps going up after that point, your performance will get worse.

Each person has their own personal optimal arousal level for each activity that they do. (e.g. Running the 10,000m will require a different arousal level than sprints.)

Anxiety has both cognitive (mental) and somatic (physical) components.
   - If your cognitive anxiety is high, increases in arousal can result in rapid performance declines, or catastrophe.
   - Your interpretation of your arousal level determines your performance. If you interpret your high arousal level as exciting, you will have a good performance. If you interpret your low arousal as boredom, you will perform at average or below average levels.

Anxiety Results in
   - Increased muscle tension and coordination difficulties
   - Attention and concentration changes: (Narrowing of attention, attend to inappropriate cues)

Control Your Arousal by Controlling Your Breathing:
   - When calm, confident & in control, your breathing is smooth, deep and rhythmic
   - When under pressure and tense, your breathing is short, shallow and irregular

Complete Breath
Imagine your lungs being divided into three parts.
Inhale: 1. Fill the bottom part by your diaphragm first by pushing your abs out.
        2. Fill the middle part by making your chest expand and raising your ribs.
        3. Fill the top part by raising your chest and shoulders a bit.
        4. Hold the breath for a few seconds.

Exhale: 1. Pull in your abs first.
        2. Lower your shoulders and chest.
        3. Pull your abs in further to expel all of your air.
        4. Let your muscles completely relax.

All of the stages of inhalation and exhalation should be smooth.
Ideal practice would be taking at least 30-40 of these deep breaths each day.

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