

2.2.3: Strategies for improvement of sporting performance



Physiological

Training programme: The coach must use the most **appropriate training methods**. This might involve continuous or interval training. The coach should also consider the **principles of training** when producing the training programme. This will involve the coach ensuring that session content will lead to the athlete working in the **correct zone** and at the intensity needed to improve either aerobic or anaerobic fitness.

Nutrition plan: Athletes must consume the level of nutrition needed to provide their body with the energy they need and the nutrients necessary to recover quickly. Athletes involved in endurance activities might engage in **carbohydrate loading**, while those focusing on increasing strength or power might consume **higher levels of protein**. **Hydration** is also a key part of any nutrition plan.

Recovery methods: A **cool down** should always be the final part of a training session. It should include activities to return the heart rate to normal and stretching and mobility exercises. An **ice bath** could also be used as part of an athlete's recovery. **Massage** is another procedure that can be used as a recovery method for an athlete after a demanding training session.



Psychological

Imagery / mental rehearsal: This strategy involves the athlete imagining or mentally rehearsing themselves completing their sporting performance. The athlete might imagine the venue, their opponents or the specific actions they will be carrying out. The athlete will focus on positive pictures so their expectation is that they will perform at their best and will win.

Self-talk: This strategy involves the athlete working with their coach to produce key messages they will repeat to themselves before and during their performance. This will help to reduce their levels of anxiety and stress and help them focus on the key parts of their technique, skills or strategies that they will rely on for success.

Goal setting: This strategy includes the production of long-term **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-Phased) goals and short-term targets that will help the athlete to reach their long-term goals.



Technical

Use of feedback: This is information an athlete receives about their performance. It can provide vital insights for the coach and the athlete and will often be considered before any further decisions are made concerning technical elements such as tactics or strategies. The two types of feedback are intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external). Both sources of feedback are based on **Knowledge of Performance (KP)** or **Knowledge of Results (KR)**.

Coaching: The coach must ensure that the types of practice and guidance being used during the training are the most appropriate and effective for the athlete. There are four different types of practice that a coach can utilise: whole, part, fixed and varied. There are also four types of guidance that a coach can utilise: verbal, visual, mechanical and manual.

SMART

SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, AGREED, REALISTIC & TIME-PHASED

