

# Performance Anxiety



## Knowledge is Power



Many athletes experience Performance Anxiety - it is normal and expected.

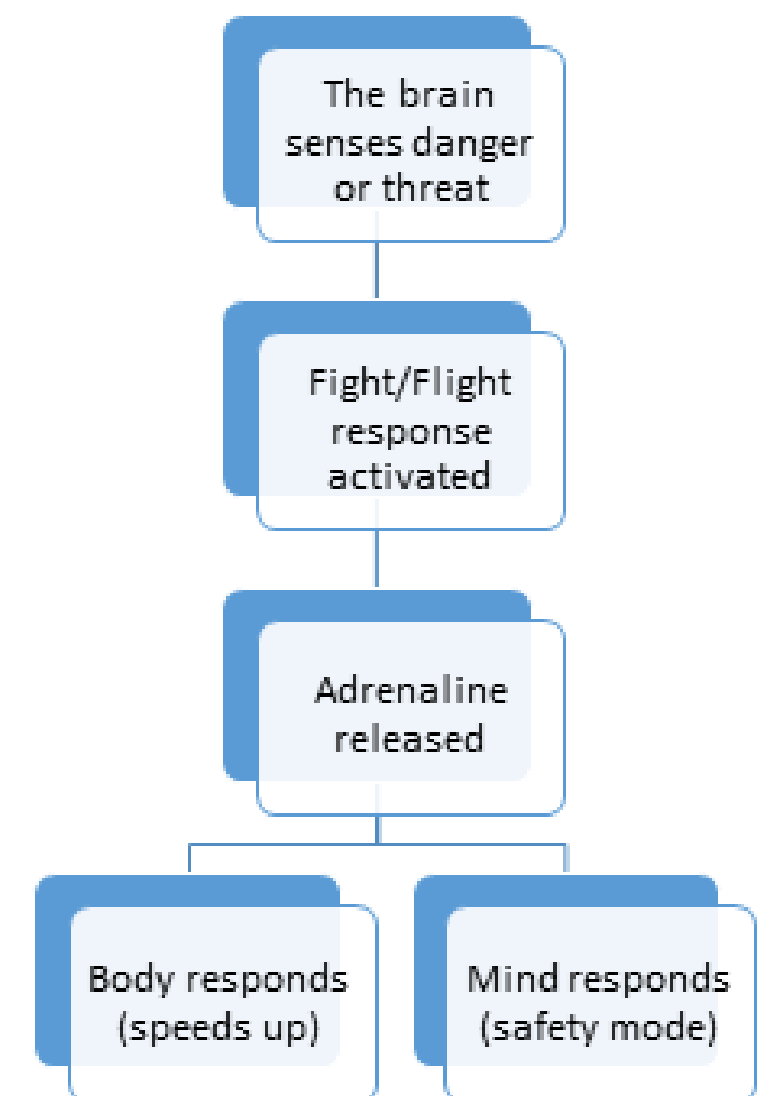
Performance Anxiety happens when we feel there is pressure (from self or others) to perform at a specific standard.

Humans all experience **the fight or flight response** when we feel "threatened" or in danger. The threat doesn't even need to be real for our body to act first and think later!

The threat in performance isn't necessarily physical danger, more likely it is the social or emotional consequences of not performing "well enough".

Understanding how the body and mind respond during fight/flight helps us learn to prepare for and cope with the nerves if/when they come.

## What is actually happening?



### Body Signs Include

- ↑ Heart Rate
- Rapid breathing
- Shaky / jittery
- Sweaty
- ↑ muscle tension
- Butterflies / nausea
- Dry mouth

### Mind Signs Include

- ↑ Smack talk (worry, negativity, self doubt)
- Confused / Distracted
- Overwhelmed / Panic
- Irritable
- Cautious or Impulsive
- Compromised decision making

## Hit the brakes to Calm the body & mind

- Slow breathing
- Muscle Relaxation
- Guided Imagery
- Music
- Mindful /slow movement (e.g. yoga)
- Grounding / centering
- Playfulness / having fun



## Change the way you think about performance!

We can learn to **re-frame performance to be less threatening** e.g. focus on the challenge, interpret nerves as sign of readiness.

We can also **change the way we respond to smack talk** - instead of buying into it we can **challenge it or shift our focus** to something more useful for performance (e.g. focusing on the process or technique).

