

如何在压力下保持冷静

题目: How to stay calm under pressure

作者: Noa Kageyama

Your favorite **athlete** closes in for a **victorious** win. The crowd holds its breath, and, at the crucial moment, she misses the shot. 你最喜欢的运动员即将迎来制胜一击，观众们屏住呼吸，但在这重要时刻，她失误了。

athlete
n. 运动员

victorious
adj. 胜利的

phenomenon
n. 现象

Choke
窒息

contestant
n. 参赛者

intuitively
adv. 直觉的

That competitor just experienced the **phenomenon** known as "choking," where despite months, even years, of practice, a person fails right when it matters most. **Choking** is common in sports, where performance often occurs under intense pressure and depends on key moments. And yet, performance anxiety also haunts public speakers, **contestants** in spelling bees, and even world-famous musicians. Most people **intuitively** blame it on their nerves, but why does being nervous undermine expert performance?

这位选手刚经历了“反胜为败”现象，纵使进行了经年累月的练习，人们仍会在关键时刻失败。“反胜为败”在运动界是一种普遍现象，因为运动员的表现都在压力下进行，并且会受到比赛节点的影响。但这种焦虑也会影响演讲者，拼字游戏中的选手们，以及世界著名的音乐家。绝大多数人凭直觉将其归咎于精神紧张，但为何紧张的情绪会影响专业人士的表现呢？

There are two sets of theories, which both say that primarily, choking under pressure boils down to focus.

两组理论对此进行了解释。二者都认为压力下的“反胜为败”归根结底是注意力问题。

First, there are the **distraction** theories. These suggest that performance suffers when the mind is **preoccupied** with worries, doubts, or fears, instead of focusing its attention on performing the task at hand. When relevant and irrelevant thoughts compete for the same attention, something has to give. The brain can only process so much information at once.

第一种理论是干扰理论。该理论认为当担忧、疑惑和恐惧 占据了人们的头脑，让人们无法集中注意力 在手头的任务，其表现就会受到影响。当与任务相关和 无关的信息争夺注意力时， 其中一方不得不做出让步。大脑能够同时处理的信息量有限。

Tasks that challenge working memory, the mental “scratch pad” we use to **temporarily** store phone numbers and grocery lists, are especially **vulnerable** to pressure. In a 2004 study, a group of university students were asked to perform math problems, some easy, others more complex and memory-intensive. Half the students completed both problem types with nothing at stake, while the others completed them when calm and under pressure. While everyone did well on the easy problems, those who were stressed performed worse on the more difficult, memory-intensive tasks.

工作记忆是我们头脑中的“速写板”，我们用它短暂存储 电话号码和购物清单等。对于高度要求工作记忆的任务来说，压力对其影响尤为严重。在 2004 年的一项研究中，一组大学生被要求解答数学问题，一些题目简单，另一些 则非常困难，且需要大量记忆。一半学生在没有任何顾忌 的情况下解答全部题目，另一半学生分别在 冷静状态和压力状态下完成题目。尽管所有人在简单问题上表现良好，但对于更困难且需要记忆的题目来说， 经受压力的学生表现更差。

distraction

n. 娱乐，消遣

preoccupy

v. 占据（某人）思想，使专注于

temporarily

adv. 暂时地，临时地

vulnerable

adj. 易受攻击的

Explicit monitoring theories make up the second group of explanations for choking under pressure. They're concerned with how pressure can cause people to **overanalyze** the task at hand. Here, the logic goes that once a skill becomes automatic, thinking about its precise mechanics interferes with your ability to do it.

第二套解释该现象的理论是 外部控制理论。这一理论是关于 压力如何使人们 过度分析当前的任务。这种说法的逻辑在于，一旦某种技能成为下意识的熟练技能，思考其精确的原理机制 就会妨碍使用该技能。

Tasks we do **unconsciously** seem to be most vulnerable to this kind of choking. A study on competitive golfers compared their performance when instructed to simply focus on putting as **accurately** as possible, versus when they were primed to be acutely aware of the mechanics of their putting stroke. Golfers usually perform this action **subconsciously**, so those who suddenly tuned in to the precise details of their own moves also became worse at making accurate shots.

需要下意识完成的任务 最容易出现“反胜为败”。一项研究对比了高尔夫选手的表现，一组选手只需要关注准确挥杆，另一组则被要求时刻想着 挥杆动作是否符合标准原理。高尔夫选手通常 依靠潜意识完成动作，因此在选手突然要 调整动作达到标准时，他们反而更难打出准确一击。

Choking may not be **inevitable** for everyone though. Research suggests that some are more **susceptible** than others, especially those who are self-conscious, anxious, and afraid of being judged negatively by others. So, how can we avoid choking when it really counts?

虽然并非所有人 都会经历“反胜为败”，但研究表明，部分人群更容易受到影响，尤其是那些自我意识较强的，容易焦虑的，害怕他人负面评价的人。既然“反胜为败”影响如此之大，我们该如何避免它的出现呢？

explicit
adj.明确的

overanalyze
v.过度分析

unconsciously
adv.未意识到地

accurately
adv.准确的

subconsciously
adv.潜意识的

inevitable
adj.不可避免的

susceptible
adj.易受影响的

First, it helps to practice under stressful conditions. In a study on expert dart players, researchers found that those who hadn't practiced under stress performed worse when anxious, compared to those who had become **accustomed** to pressure.

首先，在压力环境下练习会有所帮助。在一项关于专业飞镖选手的研究中，研究者发现，从未在压力下练习过的选手，在焦虑时比习惯压力的选手表现更差。

Secondly, many performers extol the virtues of a pre-performance routine, whether it's taking a few deep breaths, repeating a cue word, or doing a **rhythmic** sequence of movements. Studies on golfing, bowling, and water polo find that short **rituals** can lead to more consistent and accurate performance under pressure.

第二，许多运动员推崇进行赛前例行动作，例如进行几次深呼吸，重复某个提示词，或是进行有节奏的一系列动作。在高尔夫、保龄球和水球方面的研究发现，进行简短的仪式性动作可以使选手在压力下的表现更为正常和准确。

And thirdly, researchers have shown that having an external focus on the **ultimate** goal works better than an internal focus, where someone is tuned into the mechanics of what they're doing. A study of experienced golfers revealed that those who hit chip shots while focused on the flight of the ball performed significantly better than those who focused on the motion of their arms.

第三，研究者表示，将注意力集中在实现最终目标上，比关注在内部调整自己符合规范动作原理要更加有效。一项高尔夫研究表明，在切削击球的经验丰富的选手中，那些关注球的飞行线路的选手，比关注自己手臂运动的选手表现好得多。

accustomed
v.使习惯，
使适应

rhythmic
adj.有韵律
的，有节奏
的

ritual
n.例行公
事，典礼

ultimate
adj.最后
的，首要的

So, perhaps we can modify that age-old saying: practice, under pressure, with focus, and with that glorious end goal in sight, makes perfect.

因此我们也许可以 修改那句古老谚语， 练习， 在压力下， 保持专注， 锁定目标的练习， 才会熟能生巧。

glorious
adj.辉煌的，
荣誉的