

MENTAL SOCCER ACADEMY

Player Workbook

Train your mind like you train your body.
24 worksheets · one per lecture · your personal mental-training manual.

How to use this workbook

This workbook is the second half of the Mental Soccer Academy. The lectures teach — the writing is where the change happens. Writing forces your brain to turn a vague feeling into a clear thought you can actually work on.

1. **One worksheet per lecture.** Watch the lecture, then do its worksheet the **same day**. Each one takes 5–10 minutes. Don't let them pile up — a pile becomes a chore, and chores get quit.
2. **Keep it in your kit bag.** If it's next to your boots, you'll use it before training. If it's in a drawer across the house, you won't. Environment beats willpower.
3. **Bring it to training and games.** Your routines — the confidence routine, the 10-second reset card, the match-day plan — live here. Pros have pre-game routines. Now you do too.
4. **Use a pen, not a pencil.** Commit to your answers. Cross things out if you change your mind — that's growth you can see.
5. **Date every page.** In two months you'll flip back and see exactly how far you've come. That feeling is fuel.
6. **Be honest, not perfect.** There are no wrong answers here — only honest ones. Mistakes are normal in this academy. Zero shaming, ever.
7. **Missed days don't break the plan.** Pick it up the next day. The player who does 70% of the reps for six months beats the player who does 100% for two weeks and quits. Consistency beats intensity.

> **Coach's tip:** Once a week (Sunday works great), spend ten minutes flipping through that week's pages. Ask: *What did I learn? What did I actually use in training or a game? What's still hard?* Circle what's still hard — that's your target for next week's reps.

WORKSHEET 1

My best game, in my head

Lecture S1.1 — Why the mental game wins matches

Think about the last game where you played free — clean first touch, you saw the pass before it was on. Not the score. Not the goals. Answer this in 5–8 sentences: **what does your best game feel like, in your head?** Calm? Loud? Focused? Free? What are you thinking — or *not* thinking — when you play your best?

Keep this page. In the final module you'll compare it against your match-day routine — every skill in this course is taking you back to this feeling, on purpose.

WORKSHEET 2

My academy schedule

Lecture S1.2 — How this course works + the science behind it

One lecture a day is perfect — or one module a week. Your brain consolidates learning between sessions, so don't binge. Write your plan below, then lock it with an if–then plan (Gollwitzer style: pre-decided plans survive busy days).

My plan

I will watch: _____

Days: _____ **Time:** _____

Where I'll keep my workbook: _____

My if–then lock

Copy this sentence and fill in your time:

IF it is _____ (my chosen time), **THEN** I will watch today's lecture and do the workbook page right after.

Signed:

_____

WORKSHEET 3

My mental training plan

Lecture S1.3 — Your mental training plan

Your mind improves like your body does: short, structured reps aimed at one skill, with feedback (Ericsson's deliberate-practice logic). Set up your system here.

My three sections

Create these with tabs or dividers in this workbook — you'll return to them constantly.

☐ **My Routines** — confidence routine, 10-second reset card, match-day plan. In-game tools, findable in seconds.

☐ **Weekly Logs** — weekly reviews and trackers.

☐ **Notes and Wins** — every lecture's assignment, plus a running list of your wins.

My weekly review

Day: _____ **Time:** _____

My personal commitment

In your own words — what are you training for, and why does it matter to YOU? (3–5 sentences. Not what your coach wants. Not what your parents want. Yours.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date: _____ **Signed:** _____

WORKSHEET 4

My four wells

Lecture S2.1 — What confidence really is

Confidence (Bandura's **self-efficacy**) isn't one big thing — it's specific. Pick **ONE** situation you want to feel more confident in, then fill each well with one honest, specific line.

My situation: _____

1 · Past performances (the deepest well — small wins count)

One thing I've done before that I can draw on — even a small one:

_____

_____

2 · Watched (someone like me doing it)

Someone like me that I've watched do it:

_____

_____

3 · Self-talk (must be TRUE)

Something true I can tell myself about it:

_____

_____

4 · Body (rename the feeling)

What my body feels like there — and what I'll rename that feeling (e.g. "that's my body fueling up"):

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 5

My commentary team

Lecture S2.2 — Self-talk: the voice in your head

Your self-talk measurably affects your performance (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2011). It does two jobs: **instructional** (technique, focus) and **motivational** (effort, courage). This week: just listen first. No fixing yet.

Step 1 — Listen

After one training session, write 5 things your inner commentator said — especially after mistakes.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 2 — My cue card

2–3 instructional cues for your position (short, technical) + 2–3 motivational cues. All must be TRUE or instructive — no empty slogans.

Instructional (coach-voice) — e.g. “knee over the ball”

- _____
- _____
- _____

Motivational (energy-voice) — e.g. “next play”

- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 3 — The swap

Circle the cruel line above you hear most. Then write the exact swap: catch it, cut it, insert your cue.

The cruel line I hear most: _____

My exact swap: _____

WORKSHEET 6

My three moves

Lecture S2.3 — Body language: act confident to feel confident

Your body and mind are in constant conversation. After a mistake, the “shutdown” (head down, shoulders in) feeds the spiral — but you can break the loop from the body end. Write YOUR three moves in your own words, then drill them.

My routine

1. Reset breath — my count: _____

2. Posture cue — in my own words: _____

3. Ready signal — my personal cue: _____

Mirror reps — drill the sequence at home (aim: 5 days)

☐ Day 1 ☐ Day 2 ☐ Day 3 ☐ Day 4 ☐ Day 5

Game rep — first mistake of my next game

The mistake: _____

Did I run the full routine? _____ **What happened in the next 60 seconds:** _____

_____

_____

_____

> **Choose tall.** Walk onto the pitch tall and you look like a player who belongs. You get to choose the story — before kickoff and after every mistake.

WORKSHEET 7

My confidence file + weekly routine

Lecture S2.4 — Your confidence file + weekly routine

Your confidence file is a running log of evidence from all four wells — kept in your **Weekly Logs** section. Review it every Sunday: evidence you can see beats doubt you can feel.

My 8-week confidence tracker

	Performances wins & good reps	**Watched** players I learned from	**Self-talk** my best lines	**Body** how I carried myself
Week 1				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Week 5				
Week 6				
Week 7				
Week 8				

My pre-training priming if–then

IF I feel nervous or small in this session, **THEN** I _____

The 2 training sessions I prime this week: _____ **My Sunday review time:** _____

WORKSHEET 8

My alarm log

Lecture S3.1 — Why mistakes feel huge

Your brain has an alarm system that makes mistakes *feel* enormous — that's normal wiring, not a verdict on you. After your next training session or game, log one mistake like a scientist studying the alarm.

1 · The mistake and the alarm

One mistake I made: _____

What did the alarm feel like in my body?

Stomach? Heat in the face? Tight chest? Shaky hands? Be specific — this is data.

2 · The spotlight check

How long I thought about it: _____ **How long anyone else thought about it:** _____

3 · The information in the error

Every mistake carries information. What could your brain LEARN from this one?

> **Practice the line:** "There's the alarm. Thanks, brain — I've got it from here." Say it out loud once. The alarm is a signal, not a sentence.

WORKSHEET 9

My 10-second reset card

Lecture S3.2 — The 10-second reset routine

Cut this page out or copy it to the FRONT of your My Routines section. The reset isn't a decision — it's a reflex. Decide now, calmly; rehearse until automatic; execute under pressure.

My four steps — in my own words

BREATHE _____

BODY _____

CUE _____

SCAN _____

My ONE permanent reset cue

_____

My three if–then plans — word for word

IF I make a mistake, **THEN** I _____

IF the spiral starts, **THEN** I _____

IF two mistakes in a row, **THEN** I _____

Rehearsal log

30 home reps — tally each one:

☐ ☐

☐ Used it on **every** mistake in one full training session — date: _____

Game test — first mistake of my next game: _____

Did I run the full routine? _____ **What happened in the next 60 seconds:** _____

WORKSHEET 10

My self-compassion script

Lecture S3.3 — Self-compassion vs self-criticism

Self-compassion (Kristin Neff, 2003) means treating yourself the way you'd treat a teammate who messed up — honest, never cruel. Three parts: **kindness** instead of attack, **humanity** (everyone struggles), **mindfulness** (notice the feeling without drowning in it).

My three-line script — in MY words

1. Kindness — what I'll say instead of attacking myself: _____

2. Humanity — reminding myself every player struggles: _____

3. Mindfulness — naming the feeling without drowning: _____

Use it once this week after a real mistake

What the cruel voice said: _____

What my script said back: _____

What happened in the next 10 minutes: _____

Teammate test

Write one compassionate-but-honest thing you'd say to a teammate after THEIR mistake. Notice: it's the same standard you owe yourself.

_____

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 11

My mistake review template

Lecture S3.4 — Next-play mentality + learning from mistakes

The day after a game — never right after — run ONE mistake through this template. Then close the book and move to the next play.

Step 1 — PICK ONE

The mistake I'm reviewing: _____

Step 2 — Two columns

In my control	Not in my control

You only ever work the left column.

Step 3 — ONE FIX as a scheduled training rep

The fix: _____ **When I'll rep it:** _____

Step 4 — One thing I did WELL

_____

My next-play commitment

When I make a mistake in a game, my attention goes to _____ (e.g. “the next play: ball, teammates, space”)

WORKSHEET 12

My focus sliders

Lecture S4.1 — Attention Science: What Focus Really Is

Focus has two sliders: **width** (wide ↔ narrow) and **direction** (outside ↔ inside). Different moments need different settings. Draw your settings by circling a dot on each slider.

WIDE — the whole picture **NARROW — one thing**



OUTSIDE — ball, players, space **INSIDE — my body, my breath**



Right setting for MY position — three real game moments

Moment 1: _____ **Width / Direction:** _____

Moment 2: _____ **Width / Direction:** _____

Moment 3: _____ **Width / Direction:** _____

My cue word

One word that snaps your attention to the right setting — e.g. “scan”.

My cue word

Where I'll use it: _____ **When (next training):** _____

WORKSHEET 13

My pre-game routine

Lecture S4.2 — Your Pre-Game Routine

Write your personal pre-game routine as **if–then plans** — pre-decided plans survive pressure. 5–7 steps in order, covering arrival, warm-up, and the last 5 minutes before kickoff.

My routine — 5 to 7 steps, in order

1. IF _____ **THEN** _____

2. IF _____ **THEN** _____

3. IF _____ **THEN** _____

4. IF _____ **THEN** _____

5. IF _____ **THEN** _____

6. IF _____ **THEN** _____

7. IF _____ **THEN** _____

Hard-moment plans — 3 more

IF _____ **THEN** _____

IF _____ **THEN** _____

IF _____ **THEN** _____

Hard moments: nerves · a mistake · getting subbed or conceding.

Test it

☐ Ran the full routine before my next game / training — date: _____

One adjustment I'll make: _____

WORKSHEET 14

My visualization session

Lecture S4.3 — Visualization: See It Before You Do It

Tonight before bed: a 5-minute imagery session on **ONE** game situation. Imagery transfers when it matches the real thing (PETTLEP — Holmes & Collins, 2001). Afterward, rate how vividly you included each element, 1–5.

The ONE situation I visualized: _____

PETTLEP checklist — circle 1–5 for each

Element	Vividness
Physical feel your body — kit, boots, muscles, the strike	1 2 3 4 5
Environment see and hear the real place — the pitch, the crowd	1 2 3 4 5
Task the exact skill, exactly as you'd do it	1 2 3 4 5
Timing real speed — not slow motion	1 2 3 4 5
Learning include what you're working on improving	1 2 3 4 5
Emotion include the nerves — and succeeding with them there	1 2 3 4 5
Perspective first person — through your own eyes	1 2 3 4 5

My weakest element — how I'll strengthen it next time

WORKSHEET 15

My breathing plan

Lecture S4.4 — Breathing Under Pressure

Your breath is the remote control: long exhales press the brake on your nervous system. Practice the **physiological sigh** 3 times today (normal moments — not in a game): sniff in through the nose, sniff in *more*, long slow exhale through the mouth. ~20 seconds.

- ☐ Sigh practice 1 done
- ☐ Sigh practice 2 done
- ☐ Sigh practice 3 done

My 3 tools

Sigh — fastest reset (20 sec)

Sniff in, sniff in more, long slow exhale. For right-after mistakes.

Box breathing — 4-4-4-4 (30 sec)

In 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4. For steadying before big moments.

Slow breathing — in 4, out 6–8 (2 min)

Long exhales. For the bench and dead time.

Which tool, which moment — tick one per row

	Sigh	Box	Slow
Before kickoff	☐	☐	☐
After a mistake	☐	☐	☐
On the bench	☐	☐	☐

☐ Used my plan in my next training session — date: _____

What I felt: _____

WORKSHEET 16

Fixed to growth

Lecture S5.1 — Fixed vs. Growth Mindset (Carol Dweck)

Dweck (2006): players who believe abilities **grow through effort and strategy** keep going after failure; fixed-mindset players ("I'm just bad at this") shut down. Be honest — write 3 fixed sentences you've said or thought, then translate each with **"yet" + the work**: the growth version plus one specific training action with a frequency.

Sentence 1

Fixed: _____

Growth (with "yet"): _____

The work: _____ **Times/week:** _____

Sentence 2

Fixed: _____

Growth (with "yet"): _____

The work: _____ **Times/week:** _____

Sentence 3

Fixed: _____

Growth (with "yet"): _____

The work: _____ **Times/week:** _____

Keep this page. In the next lecture you'll turn this work into goals.

WORKSHEET 17

My goals

Lecture S5.2 — Process Goals vs. Outcome Goals

Outcomes (win the league, score 10) are not fully in your control — so you don't train them. You train **process goals**: the controllable actions that feed the outcome.

My outcome goal for this season

My 2–3 SMART process goals — locked with if–thens

Process goal 1 — SMART check

Goal: _____

☐ **S** – Specific ☐ **M** – Measurable

☐ **A** – Achievable ☐ **R** – Relevant

☐ **T** – Time-bound

IF _____ **THEN I** _____

Process goal 2 — SMART check

Goal: _____

☐ **S** – Specific ☐ **M** – Measurable

☐ **A** – Achievable ☐ **R** – Relevant

☐ **T** – Time-bound

IF _____ **THEN I** _____

Weekly tracker — hit or missed, plus one adjustment

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	One adjustment
Week 1	☐	☐	☐	
Week 2	☐	☐	☐	
Week 3	☐	☐	☐	
Week 4	☐	☐	☐	

WORKSHEET 18

My deliberate-practice session

Lecture S5.3 — Deliberate Practice (Anders Ericsson)

Ericsson (1993): experts grow through **deliberate practice** — structured, effortful reps aimed at a specific weakness, with feedback. Not mindless hours. Design your own 20-minute session for **your biggest weakness**, do it twice this week, and log your numbers.

Session design

My specific target: _____ **Success-rate goal:** _____

The drill: _____

How I'll get feedback (count / target / film): _____

What I'll adjust if it's too easy or too hard: _____

Session log — do it twice, log the numbers

Date	Attempts / reps	Success rate	Notes & adjustment

WORKSHEET 19

My film review + feedback

Lecture S5.4 — Learning from Film + Taking Feedback

One 15-minute film review this week — a recorded game or training clip (even phone footage works). Three viewings, three findings, one action. Then your post-game self-review.

Film review — one finding per viewing

1. Off-ball viewing — finding: _____

2. One moment type (e.g. all my first touches) — finding: _____

3. Best actions — finding: _____

ONE finding → process goal for next week

_____

Post-game self-review — the 3 questions

Honest, no self-attack. Write it the day after the game.

1 · Where was I going? (my intention)

_____

_____

2 · How did it go? (2 strengths + 1 fix)

Strength: _____

Strength: _____

Fix: _____

3 · Where to next? (one process goal or adjustment)

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 20

My sleep plan

Lecture S6.1 — Sleep and Recovery: The Hidden Training

Sleep is training your brain can't do awake — it consolidates everything you learned. Ages 11–15 need roughly **9 hours**. Do the math, build the routine, track the week.

My sleep math

I must wake at: _____ **Target bedtime (wake time minus 9 hours):** _____

Wind-down starts (bedtime minus 30 min): _____

My 3-step wind-down routine

e.g. screens off → stretch → visualization.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7-night sleep tracker

Night	Bedtime	Wake time	Hours	Notes
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

One school or evening habit I need to shift to protect my sleep: _____

WORKSHEET 21

My week map

Lecture S6.2 — School, Balance, and Your Week

The complete player protects the whole week — not just training. Block the non-negotiables first: school, sleep (8–10 hrs), team training, games. Then fit homework, solo work, and real rest around them.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
School							
Team training / games							
Solo sessions (2–3)							
Visualization (3×)							
Homework blocks (45 min, before screens)							
Rest window							

My sleep hours each night: _____

My hard-week rule

Exams, tournaments, chaos weeks: what do you SHRINK to — never delete? One sentence.

In a hard week, I shrink to _____ — I never delete it.

WORKSHEET 22

My pressure plan

Lecture S6.3 — Handling Pressure: Parents, Coaches, Social Media

Pressure from the sidelines is real — and manageable. Write your plan *before* you need it, so you're not inventing it in the moment.

Parents — my strategy

The exact words for my calm conversation: _____

_____

_____

☐ The 24-hour rule: no big soccer talks the day of a game — we wait a day.

Coaches — my strategy

One question I'll ask my coach: _____

One feedback item I'll apply visibly: _____

My 3 social media rules — written as commitments

☐ Rule 1: _____

☐ Rule 2: _____

☐ Rule 3: _____

Safety first

If any coaching situation ever feels harmful — yelling that scares you, punishment that hurts, anything that feels wrong — you talk to a trusted adult. Write their name now, while you're calm:

My trusted adult: _____

WORKSHEET 23

My weekly mental-training plan

Lecture S6.4 — Your Weekly Mental-Training Plan

Small, daily, **anchored** to things you already do — “if I finish brushing my teeth, then I visualize.” About 60–90 minutes across the whole week. Fill this in for YOUR actual schedule, do one full week checking off each piece daily, then review.

Day	**Today’s pieces + anchors** (e.g. Tue: pre-training routine · cue “scan” · 5-min visualization before bed)	Done
Mon		☐
Tue		☐
Wed		☐
Thu		☐
Fri		☐
Sat		☐
Sun		☐

Week’s-end review

What worked: _____

What slipped: _____

One adjustment for next week: _____

> **Remember:** shrink, don’t delete. Tired Thursday? Swap the 20-minute session for 10 easy minutes — the routine survives, and so do you.

WORKSHEET 24

My 90-day plan

Lecture S7.1 — Final Review + Your Next 90 Days

Seven modules, one system: confidence → mistakes → self-talk → focus → growth → complete player. Now it cycles: set → train → review → adjust. One focus per month.

Month 1 — Foundations

e.g. reset routine + breathing + sleep tracked — the base everything sits on.

My focus: _____

Actions + how often: _____

_____

Month 2 — Growth

e.g. SMART process goals, deliberate practice 2×/week, film review.

My focus: _____

Actions + how often: _____

_____

Month 3 — Performance

e.g. game-day execution under pressure, full 90-day review.

My focus: _____

Actions + how often: _____

_____

☐ Calendar reminder set for **day 90** — my full review date: _____

The player I intend to be 90 days from now — one sentence

_____

_____

> **Claim your certificate of completion** — then remember: the real certificate isn't the PDF. It's the player you are 90 days from now, built one controllable at a time.

My mental-training commitment

I've finished the Mental Soccer Academy. This is my pledge — in my own hand, signed and dated. I keep this at the front of my workbook.

- **Controllables only.** I train my effort, my preparation, and my response — never talent, never guaranteed outcomes. Nobody can promise me a starting spot or a pro contract, and I don't need promises. Mentally stronger players get more out of whatever talent they have.
- **Mistakes are normal.** Every player makes them — including the pros. My skill isn't avoiding mistakes; it's recovering in seconds instead of minutes. I will never shame myself or a teammate for an honest mistake.
- **I train smart.** I will never play through pain or injury, skip sleep to train, or put soccer above my school or my family. If I'm hurt, I rest. If I'm exhausted, I sleep. That's what professionals actually do.
- **Small reps, done consistently.** Five focused minutes a day beats an hour once a month. Missed days don't break my plan — quitting does. When motivation fades, my routines carry me.
- **I talk to myself like a teammate.** If I wouldn't say it to my left-back, I don't say it to myself. Catch it, cut it, insert my cue — next play.

My reason, in my own words:

Signed

Date

Bad games still happen — the system shortens them. **Be patient** — you're building, not finished. The system cycles: set → train → review → adjust. Nobody can do the reps for you — and now you know exactly how.