

THE SWISH TECHNIQUE

Re-directionalise thinking

The Swish technique enables us to quickly dissolve the feelings attached to unwanted thoughts and to deal with unhelpful behaviours. In the Swish we *replace* the unwanted thought or behaviour with a more useful and appropriate one because the Swish re-directionalises thinking. It is an instruction to the brain “*No, not that – THIS!*”

Use it for yourself

This is a valuable technique for managing your own thinking, states, and behaviours. Each time you use the Swish you are training yourself to instantly re-direct your thinking from unhelpful patterns to more resourceful ones. By using the Swish in your own life you develop your ability to maintain resourceful states, manage your responses to stressful situations, and engage in the behaviours you want.

How to use the Swish

1. Select a replacement ‘moment of achievement’ image

First select your replacement image - ask yourself “*How do I want to be instead?*” Call this replacement image ‘the moment of achievement picture’ and see and hear yourself ‘over there’.

You may find it useful to imagine yourself sitting in an empty cinema watching images on the cinema screen. This will help you create a dissociated image that you are detached from. It is important that the replacement image is dissociated.

Enhance the detail using all of your senses- what you would see and hear etc. Notice your body language, posture, facial expression, the look in your eyes etc. Use all of your senses and whatever else you can think of to make this image as vivid and desirable as possible.

2. Find the trigger for the unwanted patterns

If you don’t already know then it’s important to try to discover the trigger for unwanted patterns. You can do this by asking yourself “*What occurs just before this negative or unwanted feeling/ reaction happens?*”. This time, you want an image of what is going on immediately *before* you experience unwanted feelings/ reactions- you can call this ‘the trigger’ image.

3. Put the replacement ‘moment of achievement’ image in the corner of the unwanted ‘trigger image’

Imagine your replacement ‘moment of achievement’ picture, the size of a postage stamp, in the bottom corner of the unwanted picture.

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4. Swish the two images

Now you want to make the two images swop over. Have the unhelpful 'trigger image' become smaller and shoot off into the distance. At the same time have the 'moment of achievement' replacement image become larger and closer until it replaces 'the trigger image' completely. Imagine a "swish" sound as you do this- hence the name. That's one Swish sound. (Do this fairly slowly at first taking, say, 5-10 seconds to do it. Then continue, doing it a little faster each time, until you are swishing almost instantaneously - in less than a second!)

5. Clear your mind

After each Swish round blank your mind, fully! Think of something else or visualise your favourite colour. Breathing easily as you do this (some people tend to hold their breath while concentrating on doing the Swish). It is crucial to the success of the Swish to clear your mind or turn your attention outside before you do each next round.

6. Practice 5-7 times

Repeat steps 3 to 5 up to about seven times until you have difficulty in maintaining 'the trigger image'.

Standard-Swish:

To do a Swish, you need two situations: One that you don't want to happen again and one that has to happen instead of the first situation.

Now visualize the two situations. The problem-picture (a snapshot of the first situation) has to be associated, big and bright and the goal-picture has to be dissociated, small, dark and being situated in one of the corners at the bottom of the problem-picture.

Now do the swish: The goal-picture grows, gets brighter and replaces the problem picture while the problem-picture fades away.

Do this very fast. It has to be done in about a second. You can do this by visually connecting the two pictures with a stretched elastic band and letting it go when doing the swish. Blank your mind and repeat this five times.

Other Swish's:

Project the problem-picture into your left hand and the goal-picture into your right hand. Put your left hand in front of you and the right hand behind you. To do the swish, you have to move your left hand behind you and the right hand in front of you in a fast movement.