

IPS – IDEAL PERFORMANCE STATE

By Ty Hillman

Imagine it's an hour before you are getting ready to compete at a barrel race or rodeo. You are saddling your horse, putting on his boots, braiding his mane, and getting prepared. As your mind starts to wonder about how you will perform, how your horse is going to do, how much money is on the line, and who is in the stands watching, you begin to feel the butterflies flutter in your stomach. You go to your pickup, reach into your console, pull out your earbuds, and find your favorite playlist on your phone. You don't know why, but you know listening to music like AC/DC, Metallica, or Eminem makes you feel less nervous and pumps you up. As the music starts, you begin to feel yourself loosen up, the butterflies calm down, and you feel more poised and actually start looking forward to your run. All you know is that you feel relief from the anxiety that was starting to take over, but you have actually increased your odds of performing better by putting yourself into your Ideal Performance State.

Ideal Performance State, or IPS, is a state of mind in which an individual feels positive energy, extremely confident, poised, calm, instinctive, and prepared for the task at hand. IPS is synonymous with being "in the zone" or "in the groove". This state is unique for each individual as well as the task at hand and can be measured on a scale from one to ten, with one being the least amount of emotional intensity, or almost asleep, up to ten, which is being so full of energy, the person can hardly contain themselves.

If you want to perform more consistently, you need to be able to flip on your IPS like a light switch. First, you need to know what your IPS number is when you perform at your best. Do you ride your best when you are extremely chilled and relaxed (2-3) or do you ride better when you are very aggressive (7-9)?

When you are involved in an event like barrel racing, it is vitally as important to know which IPS number your horse needs to be at when competing. Some horses need to stay away from the ally and kept calm until it is your turn (2-3) while others may need to be woken up and rode very aggressively in the run (8-9). If you compete at your best when you are at a seven on the IPS scale, but your horse is high strung and needs to stay very relaxed (2-3), you will have to



Ty Hillman

...is a success coach and owner of PrepareToWin.tv. His primary passion in life is to help his clients get results in any area of life they wish to improve including peak performance, mental toughness, relationships, setting and accomplishing goals, business, and getting out of emotional ruts. He is also a business consultant who focuses on improving management and leadership as well as implementing business processes to improve efficiency and productivity. Ty and his wife, Stevi, live in Texas and train rope and barrel racing horses.

Continue Ty Hillman...

train yourself to reach a seven in your mind and focus, but your body will need to be a three for your horse to do his best. The only way for you to get mastery in this area is figure out how to increase or decrease your emotional intensity on demand and then practice it until it becomes conditioned.

If you find yourself in a timid, fearful, tired, or weak state and your IPS number is at a two, but you need to raise it to a six, there are numerous ways to increase your emotional intensity on command. Everyone is different, but one common way is to listen to music that inspires or motivates you. There are also some awesome videos on YouTube that are very inspirational. Check out the website FearlessMotivation.com. It has many videos with cool music overlaid with motivational speeches. Another way to increase your emotional intensity is to carry your body as if you were confident, poised, and full of energy. Think about how a person who is confident and filled with energy would look like. What would their facial expressions look like? What would their posture look like? What would they have to focus on and believe in order to feel that way? Another method to raise your number is to breath differently. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth quickly and with force. This brings more oxygen into your body while raising your heartrate. Another strategy is to picture a powerful image in your mind like a lion, shark, or anything else you can identify with that is strong and confident.

There are also several ways to decrease your intensity and bring your IPS number down. These methods are basically the opposite of the methods for increasing intensity. Listen to relaxing

music or watch a video you know will make you laugh. Take long, deep breaths that slow your heart rate. Picture images in your mind that are peaceful and relaxing such as your last vacation spot. Talk to the other people in the warm up arena. Don't be so serious and stone faced. No one said you can't have any fun in the warm up arena.

The only way to perform consistently is to know your IPS number, your horse's IPS number, and then practice reaching that state on command. You don't even have to be on your horse to practice; you can practice anytime you want. First, ask yourself where on the scale is your emotional intensity right now? Then, pick a number you want to reach and practice the methods listed above to raise or lower your state until you reach your desired number. The more you practice, you will find which methods work best for you and you will be able to reach your desired state quicker. Also, remember to figure out your horse's IPS and train yourself to get into your desired state in your mind while helping your horse get into his. It can be a challenge if you and your horse's IPS numbers are on the opposite end of the scale, but with practice, you can condition your mind to reach your number while your body and communication with the horse helps him reach his optimal state.

Developing the discipline to reach your IPS on command is an important aspect in the mental game and if you make the effort to practice, you will be prepared to win.

Ty Hillman

Coming soon... **PREPARE TO WIN.TV**

Updates on: [Facebook.com/PrepareToWin.tv](https://www.facebook.com/PrepareToWin.tv)