

Handling Pressure

2-5 minutes | Grades K-8

Coach cue	Pressure can make your brain jump to the result. A simple cue brings your attention back to the job you're doing.
Game scenario	It's late in a close game and you're about to take a free throw or receive a pass.
Try it	Practice a routine: breathe, say one cue, go. Repeat under a little noise if players are comfortable.
Huddle question	Which cue would help you focus on something you can control?

Player check-in

Read each question aloud. Have players vote A, B, or C.

1. **Which cue brings you back to the task?**
   - **A.** Eyes on the target
   - **B.** Everyone is watching me
   - **C.** I have to win the game here

2. **When should you practice a pressure routine?**
   - **A.** Only in the biggest game
   - **B.** Only after the game is over
   - **C.** During ordinary reps so it feels familiar

3. **It's noisy before your turn. Which cue can help?**
   - **A.** I must get this perfect
   - **B.** Breathe, eyes up, go
   - **C.** Everyone better be watching

4. **You miss a shot late in the game. What can you control next?**
   - **A.** Get back on defense
   - **B.** Change the last call
   - **C.** Make the crowd stop cheering

Ask the team	Write your own three-part routine for a pressure moment.
At home	Could you use the same routine before a presentation or test?

Coach answer key **1. A** **2. C** **3. B** **4. A**

One takeaway for our next practice _____