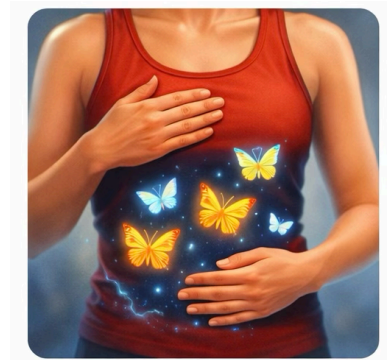


Understanding Pre-Competition Nerves

That uncomfortable feeling of “butterflies in your stomach.”
The racing heart.
The worry about making a mistake.

What if those feelings were actually helpful?

What if they are signs of your body getting you ready to perform?



Nerves Are a Form of Energy

When we feel nervous, it can feel like something is going wrong.

But really, your body is doing something very smart.

It knows you have an important event coming up.
So it begins to charge your system.

Think of nerves like plugging in a battery before a big performance.
Your body releases natural chemicals to help you:

- focus better
- react faster
- feel stronger
- be more alert

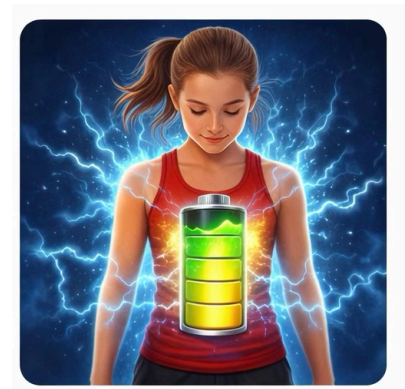
That “nervous” feeling is actually your body powering up.

You Are Not Alone

Feeling nervous before competition is completely normal.
Almost every athlete experiences it.

The problem isn't the nerves.
The problem is that most of us think we need to avoid them.

Instead, we can learn to understand them and use them



What's Really Happening in Your Body

Nerves are part of your body's natural "get ready" system.

When something important is about to happen, your brain sends signals to prepare you.

Your heart beats faster.

Your muscles wake up.

Your attention sharpens.

Your body is moving into "ready to perform mode."

It's your body pausing, tuning into the moment, and gathering the energy you'll need.



More Nerves Don't Mean You're Less Ready

Some days you might feel more nervous than others.

That doesn't mean you're unprepared.

Sometimes extra nerves show up when:

- you're more tired
- you care a lot
- the event feels important
- you need extra focus

Your body is simply creating a little more charge to help you meet the challenge.

The Goal Isn't Zero Nerves

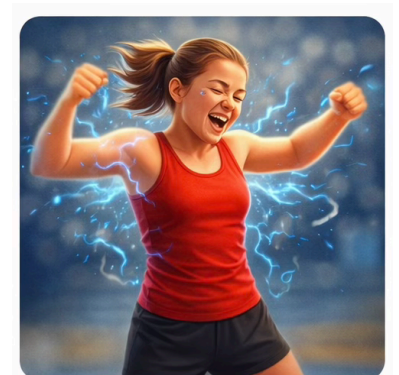
We don't want to get rid of nerves.

A little charge is helpful.

But sometimes the body can get a bit too carried away and build up **too much** charge.

That's when nerves can start to feel overwhelming or distracting.

The key skill is learning how to manage the amount of charge.



Tools to Help You Control Your Charge

Here are simple ways to keep your nerves at the “just right” level:

1. Offload Extra Energy

If you feel jittery or overwhelmed, help your body release some charge:

- shake out your arms and legs
- jump up and down
- go for a quick walk
- do a few strong movements

Movement tells your nervous system:
“Thanks – I’ve got this.”

2. Breathe to Settle the System

Slow breathing calms extra charge.

Try this:

- Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds
- Breathe out through your mouth for 6 seconds
- Repeat 5 times

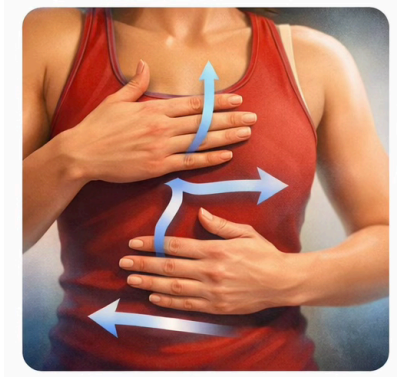
Longer exhales help your body feel steady and in control.

3. Ground Yourself

Bring your focus out of your busy mind and back into your body.

- Press your feet into the floor
- Notice what you can see and hear
- Feel the weight of your body

Grounding helps turn nervous energy into focused energy.



4. Use a Power Thought

Change the story in your head from:

“I’m nervous – this is bad.”

to:

“I’m nervous – my body is powering up.”

Simple phrases you can use:

- “I’m ready.”
- “I trust my training.”
- “This is my power.”



5. Focus on One Job

Instead of thinking about the whole performance, choose ONE thing to focus on:

- “Strong posture”
- “Smooth and steady”
- “Count”

One job at a time keeps nerves from taking over.



The Big Idea

Nerves are not your enemy.

They are a signal that your body cares and is getting ready to help you.

When you understand nerves, you can work with them instead of fighting them.

