Ready–Set–Go!

Basically, Ready–Set–Go! is a set of habits that make it easier for our brains to perform and learn. When we consistently apply the skills and strategies we learned at SuperCamp, they soon become habits. They’re automatic, they occur subconsciously, and we don’t have to constantly remind ourselves of each step in the process. When you develop effective habits, your learning will become easier, and much more productive, so start practicing as many of these skills as possible—and make your learning more mindful, meaningful, and efficient.

Get Ready

This step in the Ready-Set-Go process is about preparing to learn . . . getting our space ready, getting our stuff ready, and getting our goal ready with a clear picture of the task we’re preparing for.

- **Get your space ready.** We can do our brains a big favor before we begin a task by clearing all other potential attention-grabbers from our environment. This might look like clearing screens and loose papers from our work area before reading at home. Or it might look like making sure we have our shoes tied and hair out of our face before a big game. We need to ask ourselves *What in my environment could be grabbing at my attention? How can I change my environment to eliminate that distraction?*

- **Get your stuff ready.** Probably most of us at some time or another have sat down to work on a task, then proceeded to get up repeatedly when we realized we needed a book we left in our backpack downstairs, or we can’t find our favorite pen, or any number of similar distractions that take us away from the task at hand. Our brains work best when they can focus for long periods without interruptions, and we create better conditions for this focus by gathering everything we need before we get started.

- **Be clear. What by when?** Once we’ve set up our space and our stuff, we get our head ready by answering the questions *What?* and *By when?* Our brains love to be given a clear outcome to work toward and a specific timeline for making it happen. Before we start the task we need to have a specific goal. We need a clear picture of what exactly we want to accomplish, and when we want to accomplish it. What is the *thing* I plan to do and what is my exact timing for doing it?

Get Set

The first step in the Ready–Set–Go process that we’ve just looked at was about preparing our external environment. This next step relates to shifting our internal environment. Without this step we may find it difficult to concentrate because of all those unrelated thoughts and emotions that keep popping into our head. We also want to prime our mind for all the learning that’s coming our way.

- **Get in state.** The most powerful strategy for shifting to alpha state—the relaxed, focused state that is optimal for learning—is Q-Up! All we need to remember for getting into state is *pull up & picture, breathe & release.*

- **Focus: Q-Up! SLANT.** Q-Up is one of the best habits we can create. Whenever we find our mind wandering, we can very quickly pull it right back to focus on where we want it with a quick pull up & picture, breathe & release. Another option is to practice SLANT, which uses
mind-body connections to help us stay focused and maximize learning when we’re in class:

S = Sit up (So our body tells our brain This is important!)
L = Lean forward (Natural response to something of interest that initiates greater focus.)
A = Ask questions (Asking ourselves questions keeps our brain curious. Asking our
teacher questions clarifies content.)
N = Nod your head (Non-verbal message to our teacher that we’re listening and
understanding as well as a powerful message of “focus” to our brain.)
T = Talk to your teacher (Even small interactions with our teacher make us more
comfortable when we may need to have more important conversations,
or when we might want to apply the A to our teacher and ask him or her a
question about content.)

- **Prime your mind.** Our brains are better at taking in new information when they can connect
it to what they already know. A brain-friendly strategy, then, when we’re starting a task is to
first ask ourselves questions such as *What do I already know about this topic?* If we’re
writing a paper or doing a project, this might look like reviewing our notes or skimming
through previous research we’ve done to refresh our memory.

Once we’ve brainstormed what we know, we can brainstorm what information we still need
to seek out. We can ask ourselves questions like *What else is out there on this topic? Who
are the experts? Are there any other connections I can make?*

In priming our mind, we use SuperCamp strategies such as the brainstorming Creative
Discovery Process, mind maps, as well as super-scan when we sit down to read new
material, so brush up on all these strategies from previous Refreshers, and practice them
until they become habits!

- **ABC: positive attitude, beliefs, curiosity.** And of course, keeping a positive attitude,
believing in ourselves, and constantly feeding our curiosity will always enhance our learning.

**GO!**

And now we’re ready to tackle whatever task we defined in our Get Ready step. Once we get
started our number one task is to maintain our focus on our topic. We also want to constantly
review our learning to make sure it sticks!

- **Keep your focus on the topic.** We live in a pretty distracting world. There are screens and
sounds and voices all around us, all pulling at our attention. That’s why so many of us
multitask . . . we’re afraid we’ll miss what’s happening in the group text, so we keep
checking, even when we’re in the middle of an important assignment. One of the most
important things we learned at SuperCamp is this: Our working memory, our attention, can
only really hold on to one thought at a time. So if we’re having a conversation and texting,
there’s no such thing as giving both tasks our full attention at the same time. Our attention
has to drop one task to hold on to the other.

When we prime our mind in the Get Set step in this process, we tend to shift our attention
frequently as we move between asking questions and gathering information. Doing all of
this attention-shifting work up front allows us to focus fully and engage creatively with the
information when we start on our task. With the work of collecting and synthesizing
information done up front, we can now enjoy the process of making connections and
putting our own spin on the task or project.
• **Use your strategies.** This step is mostly about review, one of the most important strategies we can use to make content meaningful and make it stick! At SuperCamp we learn several tools for reviewing new content like Notes:TM, Mind Mapping, 10-24-7-10, Circuit Learning, content posters, and theta scanning. Refresh your memory about any of these skills you may not be using and try to make them part of your learning every day.

And now you’re ready for **Ready–Set–GO!** Make your learning easier . . . make it a habit!