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# Rituals

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It is well into baseball season, and baseball makes me think of many things, but among the most prevalent thoughts crawling around in my brain are the baseball rituals or superstitions.

Other sports certainly have them. Baseball thrives on them. Throwing balls back and forth between the outfielders, the first baseman throwing ground balls to the infielders, warm-up pitches culminating in a throw-down.

It hardly stops there. Batters waiting in the on-deck circle with their practice swings, watching and swinging in time to the pitcher's warm-ups, adjusting their batting gloves, readjusting their batting gloves, tapping the bat on their helmet a few times.

If you watch players, you realize that rituals are everywhere and almost a sacred thing: inside-out hats for rallies; greeting the scoring runner; high-fives or more intricate receptions for home run hitters. The list goes on and on.

Well, some of us also have our rituals. What are your workday warm-ups? A mantra? A special beverage (coffee, tea, or juice)? A special chair and a constant location in the reading room? Calisthenics? Music? Dictaphone in the hand and a few spins of the microphone around your head, before you commence?

Yes, I have some rituals. I *must* have the same workstation. Chair armrests down as low as they go; chair up high and desk at a high level for most people—just right for me; crack the knuckles; Dictaphone on the left; coffee left of the Dictaphone; mouse on my favorite mousepad on the right. Streaming jazz playing (I prefer a Miles Davis channel). Telephone pushed as far away as I dare; almost out of reach; cell phone charger cable on

the right. Monitor height very high and angled down at me. Okay. Everything is turned on. I'm logged into the network and ready to work. Final warm-up time: My hands are overhead and I crack my knuckles, roll my head to loosen up the cervical musculature, say hello to the first case, and lean forward with a cup of coffee to my lips.

I've seen quite a few radiology warm-up routines. One of my early attending radiologists was a recruit from my first chair who came from Sweden. Heavy accent, brilliant eye, but horribly streaked glasses. He would push up to the roller scope (remember those days?), take off his horribly streaked glasses, and smear them up a little more with his white coat, humming some unknown tune to himself while rubbing them for 3 or 4 minutes. His glasses invariably went from bad to worse; it didn't matter to him. Somehow, even with those heinously foul lenses, he would see everything I had missed overnight.

One of my prior body-CT attendings would walk to the CT scanner room (before ever eyeing a case) and go inside and chat for 10 minutes or so with the techs. He'd tell them jokes, drink his coffee, and wrap up with the same statement every time: 'Okay, have to get out there and save some lives.'

Here's how old I am. During my training, one of my interventional attendings would go into the hallway, outside the procedure rooms, and smoke his pipe. The first bowl of the day (there were many more to come) was in the hall outside an angio suite *in a patient corridor*. Jeez!

I'm interested to hear what you might do for your rituals. Drop me a note; I'll collect the best and share them some month.

Keep on doing that good work. Mahalo.