

Sports Psychology

Sports psychologists are experts in helping athletes and professionals overcome problems that impede performance. Some teach strategies that help clients maximize their physical prowess; others work with clients to overcome anxiety or a traumatic experience, such as a ski fall, that is affecting their confidence. Other clients might need help communicating with colleagues or teammates or accepting a coach's critiques.

They also help athletes:

- **Enhance performance.** Various mental strategies, such as visualization, self-talk and relaxation techniques can help athletes overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.
- **Cope with the pressures of competition.** Sport psychologists can help athletes at all levels deal with pressure from parents, coaches or even their own expectations.
- **Recover from injuries.** After an injury, athletes may need help tolerating pain, adhering to their physical therapy regimens or adjusting to being sidelined.
- **Keep up an exercise program.** Even those who want to exercise regularly may find themselves unable to fulfill their goal. Sport psychologists can help these individuals increase their motivation and tackle any related concerns.
- **Enjoy sports.** Sports organizations for young people may hire a sport psychologist to educate coaches about how to help kids enjoy sports and how to promote healthy self-esteem in participants.



Undergraduate Course recommendations:

PY 211 Statistics
PY 358 Abnormal Psych
KIN 101 Physical Conditioning
KIN 199 Ecol Appr Hlth & Fitness
KIN 300 Intro to Kinesiology
KIN 352 Psychology of Coaching

Preparation for Graduate School:

- Experience related to sport science, sport management/coaching, biology, communication, kinesiology, counseling/helping skills

Education Requirements:

- Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Sports-related majors like Kinesiology
- Examples of relevant Master's Degree programs include a Masters in Sports Psychology, a Masters in Clinical/Counseling Psychology, a Masters in Sport Sciences, a Masters in Educational Psychology, a Masters in Sport and Exercise Science, etc.
- Ph.D. in Sport Sciences to teach/research in sport sciences and work with athletes on performance enhancement
- Ph.D. in Psychology that emphasizes research/coursework on sport and exercise science
- Ph.D. in Clinical/Counseling Psychology to provide clinical/counseling services to various populations, including athletes.
- You must be licensed to provide clinical and/or counseling services as a sports psychologist. Licensure guidelines vary by jurisdiction or state, usually including completion of a doctoral degree, approximately 2 years of supervised practice and passing national and/or state exams.

Salary:

Sports/Clinical psychologist Range: \$41,850-\$71,880
University Faculty Median: \$55,000
Job Outlook: 22% growth from 2010 to 2020

Additional Resources and Further Reading:

<http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2012/11/sport-psychology.aspx>

APA Division 47 Society for Sport, Exercise & Performance Psychology

http://www.apadivisions.org/division-47/index.aspx?_ga=1.16472561.613151235.1450137968

Association for Applied Sport Psychology:

<http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/>