Sports Psychology:

Mind And Body

Sports psychology is a science. It emphasizes the mind and body for athletic success.

Sport Psychology addresses the interactions between psychology and sport performance, including the psychological aspects of optimal athletic performance, the psychological care and well-being of athletes, coaches, and sport organizations, and the connection between physical and psychological functioning.

Concern for person vs concern for performance often conflict - a good sports psychologist can balance this

Based on this definition, sports psychologists can participate in various activities, mostly focused on working to understand what motivates athletes and how athletes can improve their performance. These activities can range from counseling athletes who might have anxiety issues that hamper their performance to instructing athletes (individually or in groups) on methods of mental conditioning (e.g., visualization, concentration, and relaxation) to helping athletes deal with injuries. To put all of this in another way, a sport psychologist is working from the perspective that success in sports relies on both the body and mind.

How do you become a sports psychologist? It all begins with an undergraduate degree. This degree is typically in Psychology. There are an increasing number of colleges that offer an undergraduate Sports Psychology major.

Most individuals who want a career in sports psychology must earn an advanced degree. This advanced degree can be from a designated Sports Psychology Master’s or doctoral program. It may also be the case that you can earn your graduate degree in a clinical or counseling doctoral program, and then take additional classes in kinesiology, physiology, sports medicine, business, and marketing. Remember that a master’s degree can take 2-3 years and completing your doctoral degree may take as long as 6 years.

You could work at a hospital, physical rehabilitation center, or gym. There are job possibilities with the military, given their concern with keeping troops mentally fit for battle. Finally, you might decide to open your own practice, where you can work with individual athletes and/or teams.

**Example Sports Psychology Topics**

* Perfectionism
* Breaking Bad habits
* Performance enhancement approach
  + Intense
  + No reward
  + Postponing rewards
  + Contradicts human approach therefore a dilemma
* Performance-anxiety
* Inside the mind of athletes
* How to communicate with athletes
* Humanistic approach – free will and intentional planning
* Predicting behavior
* Motor learning and conditioning
* Mental Toughness
* Leadership and character coaching
* Self confidence
* Goal setting
* Applying knowledge/skills to: -
  + Marathon running
  + Springboard diving
  + Tennis
  + Goal keeping